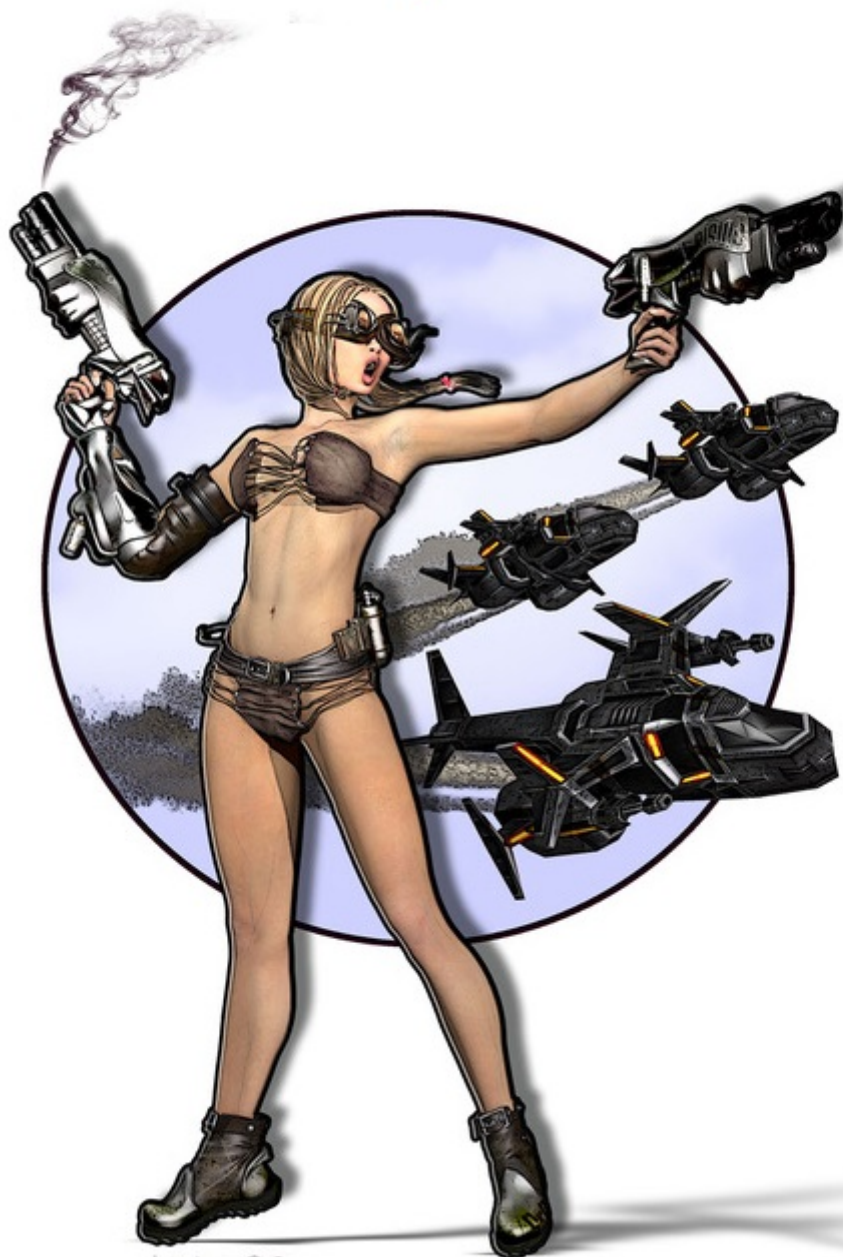


# N'APA 253

July 2021



ALAN WHITE

# The Official Organ

## #253

**Next deadline: September 15, 2021**

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The official preparer is Jefferson P. Swycaffer - [abontides@gmail.com](mailto:abontides@gmail.com)

### **Procedure: Please Read:**

George Phillies will collate and mail, but submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer. No harm is done if submissions get sent to George, but the process should be to send them to Jefferson.

N'APA is the Amateur Press Alliance for members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). As it is distributed in PDF format, there are no dues or postage fees. It is open to all members of the N3F. If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements may be possible. People who only want to read are welcome to ask to be added to the email list. Check with the official collator, who is George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609; [phillies@4liberty.net](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net); 508 754 1859; and on facebook. To join this APA, contact George.

We regularly send a copy of N'APA to the accessible (email address needed) N3F membership, in the hope that some of you will join N'APA. Please join now!

Currently the frequency is every other month, with the deadline being on the fifteenth day of odd-numbered months. The mailing will normally be collated in due time, as the collator is retired and the preparer has a full-time job. Publication is always totally regular, though some readers question my interpretations of "is", "always", "totally", and "regular". N'APA has been in existence since 1959, but has transitioned from being a paper APA to an electronic one.

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A different cover artist, as a change-up; Alan White sent us a handful of nice pics. This one is a bit cheese-cakey, and if anyone is offended, please let me know and I'll refrain from similar covers in future. (Me, I like it!)

# INTERMISSION #109

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com) for EAPA, N'APA and some other fannishly smitten fen. Follow @SFJournalen's newstweets on Nordic sf/f/h&fandom. Six decades of sf news! Watch Intermissionvision Misprint Contest. 50 typos compete. Vote for your favourite! And then we storm the TV studio as it's all fake votes. Early June, Anno Virii 2021.

## Editorially: Pandemic and the Missing MP

For more than a year I have used this editorial column to comment upon the Situation Regarding A Certain Micro Organism. So why break a winning streak! There may be some interest among readers, since the corona apocalypse Sweden has been handled a bit differently in Sweden. We have had plenty of advice and actions - wash hands, work from home if you can or feel symptoms, avoid crowds etc - but there has never been a lockdown, forcing everyone to stay at home, no mask mandates (aside from advising it in rush hour commuting, which I notice many ignored), no police on the streets handing out tickets for imagined virus offences, and so on.

But there has been one thing that has hurt, a cap on public gatherings (the organiser but not participants may here be fined). It used to be 50, but in December as the British Mutation began to spread politicians panicked and set the cap on 8. With 50 small clubs and entertainers could have events and earn if not a buck, at least 50 cents. I think the politruks over-reacted with 8 Statistics show that "tough measures" have limited effect, compare eg Florida with California. While it may stop some infections, the *negative* effects from a hammer blow to small businesses, restaurants, sports, churches, culture, etc are huge. Even more devastating is it creates an atmosphere of fear which turns people away from other health care. Millions of cancer screenings, operations, treatments etc are cancelled, which could mean many *more deaths* from that than from the virus.

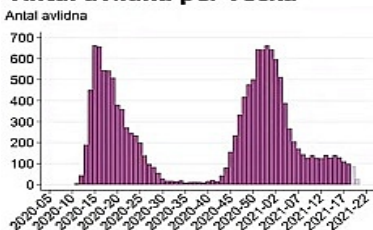
Though vaccinations have picked up speed, with warm weather and the Sun's UV rays killing corona, and death curves going flat, these slow-thinking opportunistic political party pigs have time and again moved the date for easing unnecessary "restrictions", from April 11 to May 3 to May 17 and as I write finally 1 June, when they couldn't postpone it any longer. Culture workers have circulated angry petitions against the harmful 8-person limit. And sports clubs are furious. Max 8 means organised training was stopped, which eg hits kids' soccer training. That's 100 000's of

children but also older players (though elite teams are classified as "pros" and not affected). Children also suffer from distance schooling which reports show is almost worthless. The clergy has also protested, rightly pointing out that max 8 on a service is silly considering the huge open spaces churches have. No entertainers or artists of any kind have had shows. Doing it "virtually" is not the same and its difficult to get paid, competing with free entertainment on Youtube. Museums, hotels, galleries have been near empty. Tourism is hampered, even after June 1 June due to internationally closed borders.

Those In Power now try to

continue scaring with dreaded new mutations and abroad I note they unscientifically insist vaccinated (very unlikely spreaders!) must continue with masks. I suspect they cling to masks just for the symbolism and that they like to push people around. The vaccines are effective also against mutations and when you read

Antal avlidna per vecka



Public Health Agency, June 3: corona deaths fall towards zero, with vaccine, weather and rising herd immunity.

## Vädjar i media: "Lämna din plats i riksdagen"

Sverige • Partivännerna får inte tag i riksdagsledamoten Sara Heikkinen Breitholtz (S). Nu vädjar de till henne via media att ta konsekvenserna av att hon blivit delgiven misstanke om brott efter en trafikolycka i slutet av förra året.

– Lämna din plats i riksdagen, säger Ann-Louise Lundqvist, ordförande för S i Kungsbacka i [Kungsbacka-Posten](#).

Skalet att de vädjar i media är att de inte lyckats nå henne på annat sätt.

"Leave your Riksdag seat!" the S party pleaded, via newspapers "since they've been unable to reach her in other ways". The missing MP may be the reason the PM not easing virus measures despite vaccine, summer warmth and plunging curves.

this 50-55% of all adult Swedes have had the jab, which together with probably +35% who are immune from antibodies and T-cells means substantial herd immunity. And virtually all elderly, *everyone at any risk*, have been vaccinated. So why continue to pretend and cry wolf? Get real!

But I found a possible and strange explanation for why the government goes on banging the drum: it may be because a Social Democrat Member of Parliament, the "Riksdag", is *on the run from justice!* Why else has the government when statistics say otherwise time and time again delayed easing rules? In December MP Sara Heikkinen Breitholtz crashed into a bus with her car. She had taken strong medicines and is now suspected of driving under influence (she said intense stomach pain was the reason for the crash). And then she disappeared. She has been unreachable for months. The Social Democrat party has tried everything but can't find her, and is forced to plead through media.

The thing is this threatens the government's very thin parliamentary support. During the epidemic the Riksdag has been reduced to 55 members (it's usually 349 MPs) in an internal deal between the parties, maintaining the proportional party strengths. Not counting the outlier and not too trustworthy so called Sweden Democrats the present government normally has 144 MPs in support and the opposition 143. But having an MP on the run from the law (as it seems) it becomes 143 to 143 - majority gone! The government risk losing votings, but *not in the 55 member Riksdag* where the government has 23 against 22! As long as you can maintain an appearance of a crisis PM Stefan Löfven can cling to a 55 member parliament, where he has a lead and a missing MP won't matter...



*As this MP is AWOL government delays easing virus measures to keep majority in parliament. Go figure!*

This may be the reason or a reason for Prime Minister Löfven's press conferences constantly shifting the goal post for when the virus situation can be eased. Postpone it just a little longer until the parliament goes on summer holiday and you have until autumn to deal with the fugitive MP...

A truly weird situation. And strange but not unexpected is that the papers haven't covered it. I haven't seen one word on what the missing MP does for the parliamentary balance. That she is astray has been mentioned in two inch pieces, on page 12 sort of, but nothing else. But as media is 3/4th left-leaning (=pro gov, says an official Gothenburg University study) they won't rock the boat.

Pretending to be a strong captain in charge of the crisis, guarding the helm against the epidemic, navigating murky waters, fishing for cheap poll points, just to cling to a single vote margin...is a silly and dangerous game. Our trust in politicians sink even more.

--Ahrvid Engholm

## How to Beef Up Your PDF Zine!

Try hyperlinks! I used it a lot when I edited the current version of the *Fandboken* fancyclopedia, though there are still many, many more "jumps" I could and should insert in later editions. I'm talking about internal document hyperlinks. I don't see them often in PDF zines, maybe because they take extra time to set up and zines are often are just a few pages and extra navigation help isn't necessary.

But you can make your PDF look a little bit more "flashy" and "professional" with them. Make a Table of Contents with hyperlinks and readers will be able to jump directly to a section of the document, by just clicking on underscored words.

In Open Office Writer you do it like this...(The word processor I use. You can probably do it in Word too, but I have no instructions for that.)

1. You insert a bookmark where you want to be able to jump to. Go to that spot with the cursor. Choose Insert, Bookmark and pick a name for the bookmark, which will turn up as [Xxxx](#) (coloured).

2. Then you go to the spot you want the hyperlink to. Select the words to jump to with and choose Insert, Hyperlink, Document, press the target symbol for Target in document, select Bookmark in the



pop-up menu, select the name of the bookmark and confirm with Apply.

3. Now the internal hyperlink should be set up, and to test it while editing you press Ctrl and click on it. If you want to do a hyperlink to jump back to the original position, repeat 1 and 2.

Especially step 2. may be a little bit tricky but after a while you'll get used to it. I probably won't use this much in *Intermission* because it just complicates things and isn't necessary. But I have two longer comments in the mailing comments which are almost mini essays, that you here can try. One is about [intelligence primates and neaderthals](#) and the other is about what I think is the [way of true fandom](#). Try it! You may like it!

## Ascension Day - Read SF!

We just had Ascension Day day here, May 13, which in this old Protestant/Heathen Land of the Svear is a holiday. I don't know if it is so elsewhere, but anyway - I have for a number of years been

promoting the idea of making Ascension Day and the weekend following *Time for Reading Skiffy!*

In the Nordic countries Easter has become a holiday for reading crime fiction, an idea that comes from Norway. (Originating in a story about a Norwegian newspaper headline in the 1920's promoting a new detective tale on a train robbery - look it up.) I believe that science fiction needs its dedicated reading period too. Ascension Day was when Mr JC shot up into heaven, in all practicality *becoming an astronaut!* Even if you believe more in Roscoe than Jesus Christ it seems like a fitting holiday for science fiction.

So next year, when Ascension day comes in May, grab that Asimov or Heinlein or Olof Möller you love and let your eyes race through the pages! And help spreading the SF Reading on Ascension Day idea...

## Amerivision Comes to NBC

We learn that the American Song Contest project (based on the Eurovision Song Contest, I call it Amerivision), which I wrote about in last issue, has struck a deal with the US Network NBC! That's one of the main TV networks, so it's good news for Amerivision!

From what I read the 50 US states will compete, plus 5 US territories and Washington DC - 56 contestants in all. That's a little more than in Eurovision, which takes ca 40 competing countries, but it may be a way for the network to get more shows and make it run a little bit longer. It's unclear how the states will select their songs (original material only, any genre is welcome from opera to hiphop) but in Eurovision it varies. Some have local selection shows, some let a panel just select a song. I suspect it may vary here too.

But after local selections, there will be semi-finals and then a grand final, with probably around 25 entries, and the aim is to unleash it in 2022. There will be Eurovision people lead by Christer Björkman (producer of Eurovision shows and the Swedish Melodifestivalen for 20 years) in the production group, alongside US producers of course.

The US of A is No 1 popular music, without doubt, and American show business can generate a lot of energy, so we don't have to worry there. The team will be assisted by experienced Eurovision people (I see that the brilliant script writer Edward af Sillén is among them - great!) and NBC has

## UNOFFICIAL RULES FOR THE EUROVISION:

1. Silly costumes preferred. Extra points for lots of fabric.
2. An odd gimmick helps, like a hamster wheel or burning piano.
3. When delivering points you **MUST** say "Thanks for a fantastic show!".
4. Finland and the UK take turns finishing last, except when winning (unlikely).
5. A recount is needed if Greece doesn't give Cyprus 12 points, and vice versa.

ASCENSION DAY

when  
mr jc  
became  
an  
astronaut  
is...

..a day for READING SF!



been along since electricity was invented almost, so here's no need for concern.

But the question is if this will work in a media landscape that has changed a lot since Eurovision was established? The Eurovision Song Contest was a very modest thing in the beginning, with only seven countries competing when starting in 1956, in a world where the viewer had only 1 or 2 TV channels to choose from. But it didn't matter. There wasn't much media competition, no cable or satellite, no Internet, no mobiles, no video games, no social media. Eurovision could afford to take its time to catch on. I think it really began becoming something as late as in the 1970s.

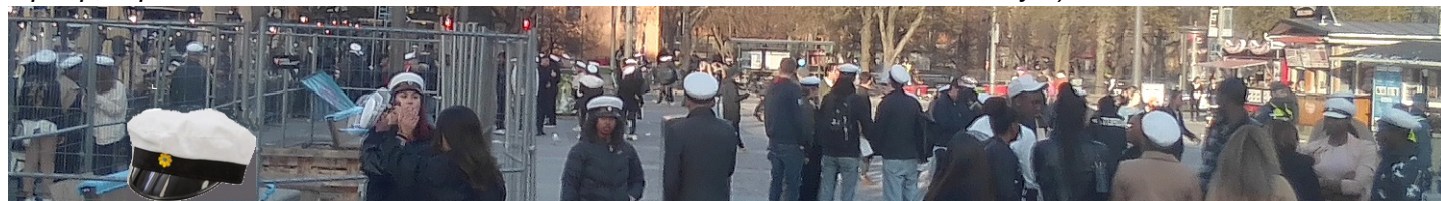


But Amerivision can't afford to wait decades to catch on. It must be a reasonable success from the start, or it will be dumped. An extra edge is that Amerivision of course can be sold abroad too, just as Eurovision,

*We make music and friends with every nation. And bankrupt the hosting TV station...We're a big black hole sucking in all the stars. We take over the world and then conquer Mars. That's Eurovision! (2016 hosts explained.)*

which will give NBC some extra earnings. I'm sure the Eurovision crowd on this side of the Atlantic is very curious and will love the show. But if all of this will really work out remains to be seen. I will follow it with some interest. And if you want to know more about how it works, watch the 2016 hosts Petra Mede and Måns Zelmerlöw explaining it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6qSt8Qp9ck>

*(The Eurovision Song Contest 2021 has meanwhile taken place in Rotterdam, Netherlands, with a physical audience of 3500, all vaccinated. A rock song by the Italian group Månesken won. Their name is actually Danish, meaning "moonshine". They have a Danish member who suggested the name using the "å" character from the Scandinavian alphabets. Sweden came on place 14. The UK was last with zero points, alas. My own favourite was a moody jazz song by the Portuguese group Black Mamba, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qg9SceXaukA>. I like jazz, among many other genres. But I don't fancy top list pop of the last few decades, of which I'm afraid ESC has its share. As synths, sequencers, auto-tuning and other machinery has taken over the studios, and you program rather than play instruments, songs have become extremely boring. I don't enjoy hip-hop, rap and such, since I have this odd idea that music must have a melody...)*



## Student Caps

The day before Mercer's Day, which fans know as April 31 (see [https://fancyclopedia.org/Mercer%27s\\_Day](https://fancyclopedia.org/Mercer%27s_Day)) is Walpurgis Night here, celebrated with big bonfires - except this year. But it is also Put On the Student Caps Day. All students, who graduate from our equivalent to High School - we call it the "gymnasium" (go figure!) - this day put on their graduation student caps for the first time.

In the US the graduation headwear is some sort of black hat with a square top. Here it is a white cap with a black brim. The white student caps began already in the early 19th century and have been along for a long time. In the picture above you can see a number of students with their white caps, which I happened to pass in Stockholm. They don't seem to care much about "virus restrictions".

I have a student cap somewhere too, but I haven't worn it for a long time. It has no propeller.

## A Staple War of Our Times

We read in *Fancyclopedia*, this source of wisdom: [https://fancyclopedia.org/First\\_Staple\\_War](https://fancyclopedia.org/First_Staple_War)

*One of the earliest mock feuds was the First Staple War, a k a the Great Staple War, which got under way in*



1934 when Bob Tucker formed the Society for the Prevention of Wire Staples in Science Fiction Magazines (SPWSSFM) and, shortly thereafter, Donald Wollheim formed the rival International Allied Organization for the Purpose of Upholding and Maintaining the Use of Metallic Fasteners in Science Fiction Publications in the United States of America, Unlimited (IAOPUMUMSTFPUSA, Unltd). The two organizations battled away good-naturedly at each other in Brass Tacks, the letter column of Astounding.

I came to think of this when I the other day found a copy of the *New York Times* (their special European edition, if I remember) laying around. I sometimes also find British newspapers, like *The Daily Telegraph* or the awful *The Sun* - a newspaper with virtually no news! Tourists to Stockholm sometimes leave newspapers around which they brought with them, but you can also find these papers in international newsagent shops.

A slight breeze caressed me as I sat down on a bench to read the copy of NYT. The wind felt mild on one of the first warm spring days, though the air flow wasn't strong enough to even rustle leaves.

Except the leaves of news! The big pages of the news reports from New Amsterdam, as it was once called (or New Jorvik, if the Vikings had stayed in North America), fluttered wildly in the wind! Even if I used both hands to try to stabilise them, it was almost impossible to read anything.

And - *wosh!* - suddenly the pages flew apart. It became a complicated operation to straighten out the pages and fold them back evenly to resemble something like a newspaper. The big problem:

*No staples!*

Bob Tucker who didn't advocate them would be glad, but I'm afraid I'm here more on the side of Donald Wollheim. It was really the mildest of winds but the lack of staples made the newspaper very difficult to read. And exactly the same goes for British newspapers. A lack of staples seems to be the common denominator of many English language newspapers! (I've seen few exceptions.)

It doesn't even have to be a wind for missing staples making it difficult to read the newspaper. If you hold it the wrong way it falls apart all by itself. How on Earth could a responsible and intelligent publisher ever get the idea to publish a newspaper without staples?

All Swedish newspapers have staples. They are very robust and a breeze to read in the wind (no pun intended). Is it a question of saving money that makes English newspapers staple-less? A few milligrams (or whatever the weight) of staples can't cost much, and the benefit of making reading wind proof surely outweighs it. Or do the publishers want to make it easier to give the paper an alternate use on the WC? Staples could get stuck in the bum which would be painful. Remember though that some papers, like *The Sun*, contains shit from the beginning.

I think it's time for another Staple War, this time aimed at clueless, staple-less newspapers that turn into tumbleweed. Read more in *The Last and First Newspaper*.

By Olaf Stapledon....



## The Fäntåstic Shört Ståry Cömpetition

*This is info for my Swedish readers, about the yearly "Fantastic Short Story Competition" for sf/f/h - all stories with "fantastic" elements. Entries must be in that quirky language below. It would however be very interesting if someone took a story in English and ran it through Google Translate...*

### FANTASTIKNOVELLTÄVLINGEN 2021

1. Skicka tävlingsbidrag som ren text (det kallas "ASCII", inga bifogade filer, t ex Word-filer) senast 30 augusti till [fantastiknovell@hotmail.com](mailto:fantastiknovell@hotmail.com) SAMT [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com). Använd rubriken "Tävlingsbidrag".

2. Noveller skall anknyta till science fiction, fantasy eller skräck. (Genre får tolkas en smula generöst. Det bör finnas något "fantastiskt" element.) Man får skicka flera bidrag. Maxlängd 50 000 tecken, inkl blanksteg och skiljetecken. Språk svenska.

3. Vinnarna utses av en jury. Noveller som placerar sig på någon prisplats postas även på SKRIVA:s E-postlista och erbjuds publicering hos DAST Magazine (dast.nu).

4. Förstapris 999 kr. Andrapris 600 kr. Tredjepris 400 kr. De tre författarna på prisplats erhåller också årsprenumeration på tidningen Skriva! Därutöver kan juryn dela ut hedersomnämningen. Alla dessa får ett E-diplom som kan skrivas ut och pryda väggen.

Detta är 22:a upplagan av Sveriges äldsta novelltävling, startad av SKRIVA, den veterligen äldsta författarlistan. För att ansluta, maila skriva-request@freelists.org med rubrik "subscribe".

Stöd våra stödjare! Wela Förlag, Exilium Förlag, författarna Ulf Broberg och Ulf Durling, samt tidningen Skriva. Tackelitack till er! (Hjälp gärna till att sprida denna info!)

# HISTORY CORNER

## SF-folket tror inte på flygande tefat i Slottsskogen!

— Vi tror inte på flygande tefat i Slottsskogen och vi tror inte på flygande tefat någon annanstans heller.

Säger de 30 unga ideella män som samlats i Björngårdsvillan i Göteborg för påskekongress i science fiction. Så den eventuella flanör som trott sig kunna uppleva interplanetariska strövtåg vid Söldammen på grund av SF-männen kan känna sig lurad. — Science fiction tror man inte på, säger John-Henri Holmberg. Den sysslar man med.

— Men behöver inte tro på det man läser om för att roas av det! Vi vet lika bra som den som aldrig läst ett ord om Mars och Jupiter att ett flygande tefat aldrig existerat.

Herrarna som diskuterar SF fram och tillbaka i dagarna tre skiljer ömt mellan science fiction och fantasy. Det förra är händelser som skulle kunna hända — alltså framtidsperspektiv på vetenskaplig grund. Fantasy däremot är historier som inte skulle kunna hända — rena fantasiprodukter således, ofta med älvor, troll och dvärgar i rollerna.

### BLIXT GORDON "FANTASY"

Den ärade Blixt Gordon som numera är camp var en tidig fantasy figur när han drev omkring på planeten Mongo på trettiotalet tillsammans med unga sköna Dale Arden. Tillsammans tämde de med alla syften såväl lejonmän som örnnmän, för att bara inte nämna de gälförsedda fiskmännen. Detta är alltså fantasy och inte science fiction och det kan mänskligheten vara tacksam för.

Fantasy är också det trädklättrarfolk som i litterär form finns att tillgå på SF-kongresser. I själva verket befinner sig trädklättrarfolket på andra och främmande planeter. Deras hjältnor har skönt grönt hår, svarta läppar, röda tänder och gul tunga.

Vilket i alla fall är ett annorlunda kvinnoideal för folk som umgås med veckopressens stjärnögda hjältnor.

Men SF-fantasterna drömmer inte alls om att rycka veckotidningsnoveller eller Kafka ur händerna på de breda lagren. — Vi vill inte frälsa folk för SF, säger John-Henri Holmberg. De som tycker om SF i film och litteratur gör det ändå och vi samlas på kongresser för att utbyta åsikter om författare och SF i andra länder. Vår dröm är inte att folk skall begripa SF, men väl att vi får en regelbunden utkommande tidskrift för kontakten mellan klubbarna.

Och den göteborgska avdelningen heter således Götcon och tror inte på flygande tefat i Slottsskogen eller överhuvudtaget.

VIVECA LÄRN



More sf and fandom history from the vaults of the Royal Library, which last year had its digitised newspaper archive open on-line a couple of months. (As a pandemic measure. Normally you access it there on their terminals.) After ten issues packed with my most interesting finds, Intermission will for a time keep at least a little "History Corner". I'll translate and summarise. Here it goes.

I have covered the 1967 Gothenburg convention before, but here's two more clips. Göteborgs-Tidningen writes March 27, 1967, "*SF People Don't Believe in Flying Saucers in Slottsskogen*" (the last, "Castle Woods", is a park there):

"We don't believe in flying saucers in Slottsskogen and we don't believe in flying saucers anywhere else either." So says the 30 young, idealistic men gathered in the Björngård's Villa in Gothenburg for an Easter convention of sf. So the possible stroller who believes to experience interplanetary excursions by the Seal Pond will be fooled.

"Sf is not something you believe in," John-Henri Holmberg says. "It is an activity. You don't have to believe in what you read to be entertained by it! We know just as well as someone who has never read a word about Mars and Jupiter that flying saucers have never existed." The gentlemen who discuss sf back and forth for three days carefully separate sf and fantasy. The first are events that could happen - ie perspectives on the future on a scientific basis. But fantasy are stories that couldn't happen - straight products of imagination, often with elves, trolls and dwarves playing a part. /FLASH

### Science fiction-träff

Ett 40-tal science fiction-älskare från hela Norden samlas under påsken till kongress i Göteborg. Det blir den tolfte kongressen i sitt slag och den anordnas av branschens tillskyndare i Göteborg som kallar mötet Götcon 1 eftersom det är första gången Göteborg får den äran. Bland kongressens ämnen märks SF (science fiction)-inslag i dagens kultur, SF kontra Fantasy (ej vetenskapligt hållbar fiction), Orientering om utländsk sf och fandom (sf-fans). Filmer visas och skivor spelas, bl a Orson Welles Världarnas krig. Ett pris, "Alvar", utdelas också. Äventyrligheterna utspelas i Björngårdsvillan och man väntar besök av flera bemärkta sf-vänner.

GORDON "FANTASY"/ The honourable Flash Gordon who these days is a cult was an early fantasy figure as he roamed the planet Mongo in the 1930's with the fair Dale Arden. Together they tamed lionmen and eaglemen with noble ambitions, not to forget the gills equipped fishmen. But this is fantasy and not sf, and humanity should be grateful for it. The tree climbing people you can find on an sf convention in literary form is also fantasy. In reality the tree climbers are on other and alien planets. Their heroines have beautiful green hair, black lips, red teeth and a yellow tongue./Unknown what all this refers to!! In any case the female norms are different for people that mingle with the



starry-eyed heroines of the weeklies. But the sf fans aren't dreaming about getting the weeklies stories or Kafka out to the hands of the masses. "We don't want to save people for sf," says John-Henri Holmberg. "Those who like sf in films or literature will still do that and we gather on conventions to exchange views about authors and sf in other countries. Our dream isn't that people shall understand sf, but that we'll get a regular magazine for contacts between the clubs." And the Gothenburg section is thus called Götcon and doesn't believe in flying saucers in Slottsskogen or at all.

I have no idea what tree climbing, green hair etc means... Götcon was also covered in Göteborgs Handels- & Sjöfartstidning the same day, "Science fiction meet":

Around 40 sf lovers from all over the Nordic area gather this Easter for a convention in Gothenburg. It is the 12th convention of this type and it is arranged by the supporters of the field who have called for the meeting Götcon 1, being the first time Gothenburg has the honour. Among the topics of the convention we have sf (science fiction) expressions in today's culture. Sf vs fantasy (fiction without scientific basis), orientation on foreign sf and fandom (sf fans). Films are shown and records are played, eg Orson Welles' War of the Worlds. An award, the "Alvar", is also handed out. The adventures will take place in the Björngårds Villa and attendance by several famous sf friends is expected.

As has been noted, while the sf genre early on was getting a lot of positive attention in media around 1953, it soon turned into scepticism, as you can see in this review of The Man Who Sold the Moon, by our dear Bobby Heinlein, in Svenska Dagbladet March 8, 1954, "Hotchpotch of Crazyness":

This thing called sf is suspicious. The prolific and robust Robert A Heinlein gives the impression he is looking for himself. He worries more than entertains with his attempts to squeeze funny scientific speculations together with discussions among American profit sharks. Idealism and business don't go together. The way these gentlemen try to hoodwink each other in loose lowbrow prose is embarrassingly naive. A street mangler on Norra Ban Square /HQ of the trade unions/ would have much to teach Mr Delos Harriman & Co, when this cute gang tries to make business with real estate on the Moon. The need of people to be fooled is probably big, but they don't get more stupid with technological breakthroughs. That would be grotesque. The great fun in Heinlein's new book isn't the Moon businesses but the stuff about rolling roads, that makes cars redundant. In that chapter there's stuff for a development which very well could become necessary in a generation's time. Such foundations make this genre enjoyable. The vulnerability of technical wonders is also expressed. It's not difficult to believe in it for a Swedish railway traveller who has been delayed many times just because a crow or two around Tullinge had caused troubles with the cables of our electric trains. Mr Heinlein ought to look back to the teacher M Jules Verne, who among other things have written the novel From Earth to the Moon. The modest and blind Verne wasn't blind! from Nantes let the magic wand give even the boldest speculations a bit of probability. His knowledge of science is said to have been substantial.

## ROBOTMYSTERIET på Rialto och Rivoli

En enkel sciencefiction, tyvärr gjord utan minsta humor. Handlingen utspelas i ett underjordiskt laboratorium någonstans i den mexikanska öknen, och där har man verkligen robotmysterier att brottas med. Onekligen är en hel del av de vetenskapliga experimenten ganska fiffigt uttänkta, men fullt så mystiskt går det nog inte till i USA, även om man där är mer eller mindre hysteriska då det gäller tekniska hemligheter. Rolig att återse är Herbert Marshall, den här gången som någon sorts överdängare i vetenskapliga mysterier under jorden. GÖSTA WERNLÖF

Heinlein's wand is more like a pole of a wooden fence, swung around with monumental power. The thunder is worrying; will sf sink to the level of literary canned food like comics?

The not too happy reviewer of course didn't know that Neil and Buzz would walk on the Moon mere 15 years later. A reason sf became "suspicious" was probably the tsunami of Earth-invaded-by- aliens-or-threatened-by-mad-scientists movies arriving from Hollywood. One example, "The Robot Mystery" wasn't particularly well-liked in Expressen March 22, 1955:

## Pyttipanna på galenskaper

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN: *Mannen som sålde månen*. Till svenska av Harry Östlund och Sven Elmgren. Eklunds. Pris 9:50.

Det här med science fiction svajar betänkligt. Den flitige och robuste Robert A. Heinlein ger intryck av att vara på jakt efter sig själv. Han oroar mer än han förströer med sina försök att knäda in roliga vetenskapliga spekulationer vid sidan av samtal mellan amerikanska profitshajar. Idealitet och affärer hör inte ihop. Herrarnas sätt att på slänglig lågprosa försöka lura varann är blossande naivt. En gatumånglare vid Norra Bantorget i Stockholm kunde ha mycket att lära ut till mr Delos Harriman & Co., när de snygga skaran försöker göra affärer med tomtmark på månen. Människors behov av att låta lura sig är sannolikt betydande, men fördömmningen växer nog ändå inte i kapp med de tekniska landvinningarna. Det vore för groteskt.

Det verkligt roliga i Heinleins nya bok handlar inte om månaffärerna utan om de rullande vägbanorna, som gör hela överflödiga. I de kapitlen finns råstoff till en utveckling som rent av kan bli nödvändig inom någon mans-ålder. Sådant underlag gör den här genren njutbar. De tekniska undervärkenas sårbarhet skildras också. Det är inte svårt att tro på den för en svensk tågresenär som blivit försenad många gånger blott för att en kråka eller två i Tullingetrakten trasslat till det med ledningarna för våra eltåg.

Mr Heinlein borde söka sig tillbaka till lärofadern M. Jules Verne, som bland mycket annat skrivit en roman "Från jorden till månen". Den blide och blinde diktaren från Nantes lät fantasiens trollspö ge även de djärvaste spekulationer något av sannolikhet. Hans naturvetenskapliga insikter lär ha varit betydande. Heinleins trollspö är närmast en gärdsgårdsstör, som svingas med brakande kraft. Bullret oroar; ska science fiction sjunka ner till något slags litterär burkmat av samma näringsvärde som seriefigurerna?



Simple sf unfortunately done without any sense of humour. The plot centres on a subterranean lab somewhere in the Mexican desert, where you truly have robot mysteries to deal with. You must admit that some of the scientific experiments are clever, but one doubts they really do it in quite these mysterious ways in the US, although they over there are more or less hysterical about technological secrets. It's great to see Herbert Marshall again, this time as some sort of super expert on scientific mysteries underground.

## Billig mutant

● PINGVINFÖRLAGET har startat en ny billighetsserie, "Atom-boken", som enbart skall omfatta science fiction-romaner. För det facila priset av en krona kan man nu i närmaste tobakshandel eller tidningskiosk inhandla seriens första nummer, "Rymdspionen" av Lee Elliot. Lee Elliot är en helt ny bekantskap för undertecknad och ingen angenäm sådan; troligtvis tillhör han de amerikanska författare som förser de s. k. "pulp magazines" med oanständigt dälliga space operanoveller.

● "Rymdspionen" är en tröttsamt berättelse om hur några Secret Service-agenter från Jorden lyckas smuggla ut en mutant med oömbärliga kunskaper från diktaturplanet Trone, som länge dolt sig bakom en ogenomtränglig elektronridå. Om Elliots författarambitioner sträcker sig så långt, att han med sin roman avser att ge en allegori över det nuvarande politiska läget är tvivelaktigt. Hur som helst är idén i så fall för klumpigt utförd för att motivera att förlaget rubricerar den som science fiction. "Rymdspionen" är helt enkelt naiv space opera och saknar till råga på allt det som stundtals kan försona en med denna genre, en intensiv spänning. Att man över huvud ger sig tid att plöja igenom hela romanen beror på att det är så ynkligt beställt med över-sättningar av amerikanska sf. Det finns ingen marknad för sf-böcker här i landet, påstås det från förläggarehåll. Jodå, det finns det visst, om man publicerar bra sf, men en roman som "Rymdspionen" kan sannemligen varken värva nya proselyter eller tillfredsställa de redan frälsta.

Internet Movie Database says the original title was "Gog" and describes it: "A security agent investigates sabotage and murder at a secret underground laboratory, home of two experimental robots." I found it on Youtube, if you're interested: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhHQF94ETVQ>

The sf books we got around that time tended to be seen as cheap stuff too, or "Cheap Mutant", as in this review in Aftonbladet, August 10 1957:

Publisher Pingvin has begun a new cheap series only for sf novels, "The Atom Book". For the low price of SEK1 /ca 20 1950s cent/ you may now in your closest tobacconist or newsstand buy the first title, Rymdspionen /"The Space Spy", see the cover/ by Lee Elliot. Lee Elliot is a new acquaintance for yours truly and not a pleasurable one; he is probably one of the American authors who provides so called "pulp magazines".

/Google says original title is The Third Mutant, and SF Encyclopedia [http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/elliott\\_lee](http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/elliott_lee) that it's in fact a pseudonym for British writer William Henry Fleming / with indecently bad space opera stories. The Space Spy is a tiring story about how some Secret Service agents from Earth manage to smuggle a mutant with invaluable knowledge from the dictator planet Trone, which has since long hidden itself behind an impervious electron curtain. If Elliot's ambitions stretches as far as to an attempt to make an allegory about the present political situation is doubtful. In any case the idea is too clumsily done to motivate for the publisher to label it sf. The Space Spy is simply a naïve space opera, which on top of all misses everything that at times may reconcile you with this genre, which is intense thrills. That you at all take the time to read through the novel is due to that there are ruefully few translations of American sf. There is no market for sf books in this country, publishers claim. Well, there is, if you publish good sf, but a novel like The Space spy may certainly not recruit new followers or satisfy those who are hooked.

From space opera to fantasy - ø10 if you can spot the difference! - as we go to Dagens Nyheter March 7 1975, proclaiming a dressed-up masquerade parade. It would never be allowed in dystopian May 2021! But another virus arrived in the 70s, started by the ring-leader JRR, as we see in "From Books through Town":

**'Have you read Lord of the Thrones by GRR Tolkien?'**  
**'No, but I have read Game of Ring by JRR Martin!'**

Three things happen May 17th: Norway celebrates her national day, Göta canal opens and there's a carneval in Stockholm. Stockholm's Tolkien Society Forodrim has invited their sister societies from Uppsala and Örebro to take part in this fairy tale march. They start in Norrmalms Square, and march away 12 o'clock. The crowd then rattles through Kungsan and Gustav II Square and hits Västerlång Street, upon which the whole company buys tickets to the ferry and upon the blue waves transfers to Djurgården. There they'll have a party in the form of a picnic. All participants have robes, swords and costumes inspired by the stories by Tolkien. That substantial amounts of childishness is also needed must be unnecessary information, so it won't be included. Interested civilians, also those who have nothing better to do, are invited to participate, preferably with their own costume, with as much as imagination as possible. Tolkien had nothing against imagination, as far as we have heard.



## Ur böcker genom stan

Tre saker inträffar den 17 maj: Norge firar nationaldag, Göta kanal släpper till och det är karneval i Stockholm.

Stockholms Tolkien-sällskap Forodrim har inbjudit Uppsala och Örebro's systersällskap att delta i detta sagotåg.

Man börjar på Norrmalmstorg, varifrån man avtågar kl 12.

Sedan rasslar skaran genom Kungsan och över Gustav den andres torg och slår in på Västerlånggatan, varpå hela gänget löser biljett till färjan och på bøljan tar sig över till Djurgården.

Där uppstår festligheter av picknickkaraktär

Alla deltagarna har mantlar, svärd och dräkter som inspirerats av Tolkien's sagor.

Att ansenliga mängder barnasinne ävenledes är för handen torde vara en överflödigt uppgift, varför vi inte tar med den.

Intresserade civilpersoner, även sådana som inte har nåt särskilt på hjärnan, inbjuds delta, gärna i egen dräkt, så fantasifull som möjligt.

Tolkien hade inget emot fantasi, efter vad vi hört.



Att ge ut en diktsamling, hette det förr i tiden, är som att släppa ner ett rosenblad i Grand

# KRÖNIKAN

Av  
Flips

Canyon och sedan sätta sig ner för att lyssna efter ekot. Men det var som sagt förr i tiden.

Harry Martinson.

son, som just släppt ner ett sådant rosenblad, får i dag hålla sig för öronen för att inte trumhinnorna skall spricka av dånnet från alla recensionerna.

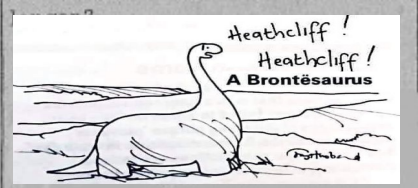
Men han är ju inte heller någon vanlig liten poet utan en högst modern diktare som i. o. m. rör sig med s. k. science fiction och skriver om interplanetariska färder med rymdskepp. Om ett sådant rymdskepp heter det att "här slumrar ingen chadwick, putar daisi, / jag rörs i gejderna, jag är vlammm och gondel, min nejd är gander och min fejd är rondel / och vept i taris, gland i deld och yondel".

Om Harry Martinson någon gång skulle komma på idén att skriva anonyma brev och då använda samma nomenklatur blir det en lätt match för professor Wellander.

Om rymdskepp med vlammm och gondel, deld och yondel kan man drömma många sköna drömmar

men sköna drömmar har med tiden fått en beklagligt kort livstid, närmare bestämt cirka åtta timmar. Vad som är sanning i morgontidningarna är bara lögn och förbannad dikt i kvällstidningarna (eller kanske ännu oftare tvärtom). I går morse fick man sålunda veta att brittiska flygdepartementet, där mig veterligen aldrig någon chadwick slumrat, sett ett riktigt livs levande flygande tefat och därtill ansett sig böra meddela att det för sin del inte uteslöt möjligheten av ett interplanetariskt fenomen. Genast började man då naturligtvis yra för sig själv att nu, nu, nu stundar det tusenåriga riket, då varelses av en högre intelligens än t. o. m. våra inhemska språkprofessorer beslutat sig för att ta hand om sina besvärliga rymdgrannar för att få en smula ordning på torpet. På kvällen var det flygande tefatet bara en väderleksballong och förbi var den skimrande drömmen. Så där är det alltid. I hanegället hör man den jublande rösten: "Tallyho, tallyho, jag har skjutit en dront..." När skymningen sänker sig över stad och land är dronten förvandlad till en anka.

Men tänk om det nu ändå var ett flygande tefat. Marsmänniskorna är väl inte dummare än att de kan förkläda sig till väderleksbal-



That must be - as far as the Royal Library search engine could tell - the first mention of the Stockholm Tolkien society in the papers. As you note, it was rather sarcastic. Grown men dressing up... But they'd soon get their defender in that paper, in the form of Martin Stugart (known as "Bilbo", member of the Tolkien society) who worked for Dagens Nyheter for many decades. He eg did their events calendar, there often including Tolkien events - and sf events were also favourably treated! Yours truly, your fan historian, hasn't been much into Tolkien, but I have been to some events, eg seen their yearly spring parade a few times (still on, when not stopped by a virus from Mordor). I once even took part in the parade...in 1979, dressing up in a parody costume (armour of cardboard, toy sword etc). Some didn't fancy that stunt too much, so I conclude they try to dive so deep into their fantasy world that they lose humour and cognitive distance to their stuff.

*Intermission* has covered Harry Martinson and his sf poetry in *Aniara* quite a lot. Here's more, by the signature "Flips", in Aftonbladet November 20 1953. Harry published his first *Aniara* poems in the collection *Cikada* in 1953, the year when these space stories had just arrived on our stage and the cat sat on the mat thinking about if it was worth dragging in:

*To publish a collection of poetry was, once said, like dropping a rose petal into the Grand Canyon and sit down and listen for the echo. But that was earlier. Harry Martinson has now dropped such a rose petal that you have to cover your ears for the eardrums not to shatter by the thunder from all the reviews. But then he isn't an ordinary little poet but a very modern one who even works with so called sf and writes about interplanetary journeys with spaceships. One of those spaceships is like "here sleeps no chadwick, putar daisi / I'm moved in the gejdern, I am vlammm and gondel, my nejd is gander and my fejd is rondel / and shrouded in taris, gland in deld and yondel". /Don't worry if you don't understand some words, no one does./ If Harry Martinson ever would get the idea to write anonymous letters and then uses the same vocabulary it'll be an easy game for professor Wellander. You can have many dreams about vlammm and gondel, deld and yondel but sweet dreams have over time sadly had a short lifespan, more precisely eight hours. Truth in the morning papers is only a lie in the evening papers (or perhaps often the other way around). Yesterday we learned that the British aviation department, where as we know no chadwick slept, has seen a real life flying saucers. and on top of that thought they announce that they didn't exclude the possibility of an interplanetary phenomenon. You would then of course be delirious and think for yourself that how, now is the thousand year realm here, when beings of a higher intelligence than even our language professors, decided to take care of their troublesome space neighbours to create some order in the universe. In the evening the flying saucers turned into weather balloons and the shimmering dream had passed. That's always the way it is. As the rooster cackle you hear the triumphant voice: "Tallyho, tallyho, I have shot a dodo...". As dawn comes to town and country the dodo turns onto a canard. But think if it really was a flying saucers. The Martians should be smart enough to disguise themselves as weather balloons.*

**I'm sorry my fanzine is late! I had a tonsillectomy. But instead of removing my tonsils, the surgeon by mistake took my stencils...**



I have no idea why Martinson's use of invented words so impressed critics. They liked *Aniara*, unlike flying kitchenware. Today UFOs are once more flying around, waiting for a US government report.

Finally something not from the Royal Library archives, but it connects to the Atomic-Noah club and Martinson. In early May national broadcaster SVT showed a Swedish sf film I for some reason had missed through all years. Maybe you could call *Intill helvetets portar* ("By the Gates of Hell", 1948, dir Göran Gentele) slipstream, a word invented by Bruce Sterling for the borderline "fantastic", but I think you could very well see it as straight sf. The plot deals with a Swedish scientist researching what would lead to an atomic bomb, using improbable nuclear chain reaction principles of pure fantasy, but needed for the plot. I would have included this film in my recent *Foundation* article (#132, "The Atomic Bomb and Early Swedish Fandom") but I didn't know about it as I had the final proofs last autumn. Here's the plot:

*Professor Victor Barring is a Noble laureate atomic physicist who sees science as the way to "find the truth", even if it leads to "the gates of hell".*

*What results are used for isn't his business. The government is sceptical to his research, so being underfunded he has to accept funding from a mysterious Dr Kanzel who has connections to the military. His wife becomes sceptical to his work, but as his son is taken to hospital he is able to use atomic research for a treatment, which makes him begin to change his attitude that science-is-fact-finding-and-damn-the-torpedoes. To this is added that he finds a substance that would make starting a chain reaction and build the bomb easy as pie. He drifts into a newly started atomic bomb protest movement and speaks on a meeting against the Bomb. Kanzel seeks him out with some goons to coerce him to share his results (it's hinted that Kanzel works for a foreign power) which the professor stalls - until dawn, when Barring says the rising sun would illuminate the*

*situation, and raise the blinds over the table with his chain-reaction substance...*

There are many scenes with scientists in white cloaks, turning dials and examining test tubes. Professor Barring is played by Lars Hansson, one of the leading actors of the time in one of his last films. And the script was by the famous writer Sven Stolpe and the experienced Gösta Stevens, so it was a major movie on a blazing hot topic of the day. The government had at the time sent research teams to the US to try to pinch some atomic power stuff. We seriously considered building us those humongous firecrackers after WWII, plans dropped in the early 1960s.

A very interesting film, and an early example of trying to deal with the ethics issues around nuclear weapons.



## Mailing Cömmments

First *EAPA*, the May mailing, then *N'APA*, the mid-May mailing. Two of the comments may also be seen as almost **mini-essays** and used as examples of hypertext jumps.

**Henry Grynnssten:** Wow! Wild Ideas always has long, interesting articles, well-researched, with footnotes and everything. The drawback for me is that it's very difficult to comment these long essays without a thorough reading. But I tend to read fast and stop here and there to read more carefully. Anyway, I'll do my best to give some of my views and comments. **About intelligence primates and neanderthals:** As for the consciousness of higher primates, elephants etc I just keep

the question open. If they have something resembling our consciousness is something we can't say for sure, it may be so - or not. I'm aware of theories that consciousness wasn't something Homo Sapiens had from the beginning and it then sort of popped up, 100 000 years ago or whenever. I'm not so sure that consciousness is either on or off, either a 0 or 1, either there or not. Consciousness isn't likely for most species, but for some there may be a ladder partly climbed. How come? Let us think about when we were children. One may claim we didn't have consciousness when laying in the womb and that it didn't pop up as we ourselves popped out. Consciousness came gradually from the time of birth to the point in time of childhood when we had the earliest memories. I'm sure that if we think about how our own consciousness came about, and really try to look back and think hard about it, we will realise that it was something that came about gradually, a ladder we began to climb. And if so, consciousness *cannot* be either on or off. There must be a gradual scale, though of course that scale is on zero for most organisms - while as said I leave the door ajar for higher primates, dolphins etc. But I don't keep the question open for Neanderthals (or Denisovians, who seem to have been on a similar evolutionary level). I think Neanderthals had at least some or probably a significant degree of consciousness on that ladder. Henry argues Neanderthals had consciousness 0. I think they would have consciousness at least 0.9 (Homo Sapiens is 1), a number Henry argues can't exist since it's 0 or 1. Fine, let's agree to disagree. 0.9 is rather high, but Neanderthals did have big brains, and I wouldn't be so fast with dismissing anthropological finds. Henry doesn't mention that it seems Neanderthals buried their dead, something which requires some advanced thinking, knowing the difference between dead and alive to start with, having the idea to treat the dead with some respect, being able to plan knowing that if the body was just left there it would begin to stink, perhaps even having thoughts of an afterlife... There are several reasons for remains of Neanderthal culture being relatively few. First of all, the number of Neanderthals was probably very small! They had a hard life, and if they were slightly less smart than Homo Sapiens their life was even harder. Secondly, unlike eg the Australian aboriginals living in a dry semi-desert, Neanderthals lived further north, in a forest landscape with rain, forest fires, animals finding and chewing on or eating remains. The small number of Neanderthals lived in places where stuff more easily was destroyed by time. Still, some Neanderthal artefacts have been found, showing some level of culture. As for the language I believe that language came because we need to organise our lives and share information with each other...

**William McCabe:** Wasn't it BBC that did the April Fool's joke about the spaghetti harvest having been bad, so the price of pasta was expected to go up... I'll have comments about the virus stuff in the editorial. I haven't BTW had a jab yet. I'm not really worried about the virus - and may have had a visit by it last spring, so I *may* be immune - and think it is too cumbersome to have two jabs, so I'll think I'll wait for the J&J vaccine which only requires one shot. I like oneshots!

**Garth Spencer:** Hm, had the N3F a twitter account they lost the password to? Why not ask Twitter staff to get it? Just give them proof that you are legitimate N3F staff. I use "politruk" as derogative slang for "politician". It was what Soviet political commissars were called and I have some limits in my enthusiasm for politicians. They try to meddle too much in the individual citizen's life, like now in virus times. People become happier and more creative if we respect the individual. Letting the collective come before the person is the path to dictatorship. We see all kinds of strange doings by politruks during this pandemonium pandemic period...

**John Thiel** (who contributed to both APAs): With "We in fandom need more togetherness and less apartness" I interpret it as you are advocating more openness in our fandom to followers of other types of media. Forgive me if my interpretation is wrong, but I will here anyway grab the opportunity to describe what I think is *the way of true fandom*. I'm not so enthusiastic about mediafandom and I'll try to detail why. For me Fandom, with a capital F, is the old, traditional one dealing with sf literature, fanzines, sf magazines and in general *sf in text form*. Movies, TV shows, games, comics and other types of usually visual media are fringe interests for us. People interested in those things are thus often called mediafans, as well as fringe fans. Fringefandom began with

comics fandom in the 1950's, but apart from a few (not many) dealing with both literature and comics, it almost immediately carved out its own path and was never a part of our Fandom. Fringefandom continued with eg the medieval Society for (Un)Creative Anachronism and Star Trek in the 1960s and role-playing games in the 1970s . Both both trekkers and gamers inspired this massive costuming craze. I know traditional Fandom sometimes had costumes too, but *limited* to special shows on conventions. Fringefandom is *huge* and gets all the media attention, since silly people in costumes is "good TV". In Sweden fringefans organise in SVEROK (short for the "Swedish Role-playing and Conflict Gaming federation") with 80 000+ members! But it's not *our* Fandom. Our true and original Fandom is a unique structure in many ways. To summarise 1. Fandom is a *flat, self-organising group that shuns top-down hierarchies*, and based on individualism rather than huge collectives like big federations. In comparison, the SVEROK mentioned is heavily top down organisation. All attempts to create huge federations for our Fandom have failed since fans are fanarchistic, a bit of mavericks. Fringefans are different in this respect, for example marching in big collective "nerd parades". I've never heard of trufans marching city streets in parades. That's something Fandom wouldn't do, it's just too embarrassing. 2. Fandom has *evolved into a complete "society" with its own culture and a long history*, from the late 1920's and on. It has its own information structure (prozine letterhacking early on, fanzines, LoCs, correspondence), its own traditions (conventions, fanslang, myths, awards, etc), an international super-structure (Worldcons, Eurocons, fan funds), its own history research, its literature and art (Fancylopedia, TED, Rotsler, Atom and other mimeo art), even religions (Roscoe, Ghu etc - admittedly not to be taken *too* seriously). I think it was Greg Pickersgill who once noted that "Fandom has a culture the size of a small European country". Fringe/mediafandom simply doesn't have all this! Instead of creating they are more about following and copying (as they have copied filking and fanfiction from us). 3. Fandom has has this *light-hearted, recursive property we call "fannishness"*, to deal with fandom in itself for its own sake, usually in a humorous way. It doesn't have with science fiction at all to do! My own observation is that fringefandom usually lacks a sense of humour and a healthy - what I call - cognitive distance. With cognitive distance I refer to the ability to take a step back and have a look at what you're doing from the outside. That is what you do with fannishness, which is a "meta" position where you can make fun of your own interest. Fringefans on the other hand aim to dive as deep as possible into their media interests, to become a part of it. That's why they make the most detailed construction drawings of USS Enterprise, spend thousands of dollars on collecting plastic stuff from movies and hundreds of hours on sewing costumes and forging chain mail. If you try to become integrated with, a part of your favourite film, show, game etc you don't have a cognitive distance. If we'd merge our individualistic Fandom, with its long history, its own traditions and recursive fannishness, with movies, games, TV shows, all these costumes etc - we'd risk to lose everything that is unique with Fandom! The true, old Fandom with a capital F would suffer if fanzines were replaced by computer games. It would be too sad if *The Enchanted Duplicator* suddenly became something like Harry Potter. We'd suffocate if Fandom was invaded by all this clothes and fabric from costume nerds. If you widen something too much you lose the essence of what you like. Suppose you're a stamp collector and love stamps more than anything. Then someone suggests supermarket rebate coupons must be recognised as some sort of stamps too. And later stickers for sports clubs or rock groups are added. Before you knew it, it has no longer anything to do with philately! I'm not just interested in mediafandom, I don't want to immerse myself in games, movies and such. I know that the Fandom I have known and cherished may be dying - partly because literature is pushed back by new media, but also that many fen are getting old - but I can always privately keep it alive in my heart. I don't want it to be "saved" by being diluted and turned away from what has made it unique. And besides, why on Earth would fringefandom have anything to benefit from trying to invade Fandom? They are so huge and successful by themselves, with cons for 50 000 costumers and federations of similar size. They march the streets and get most of the attention. They don't need us.



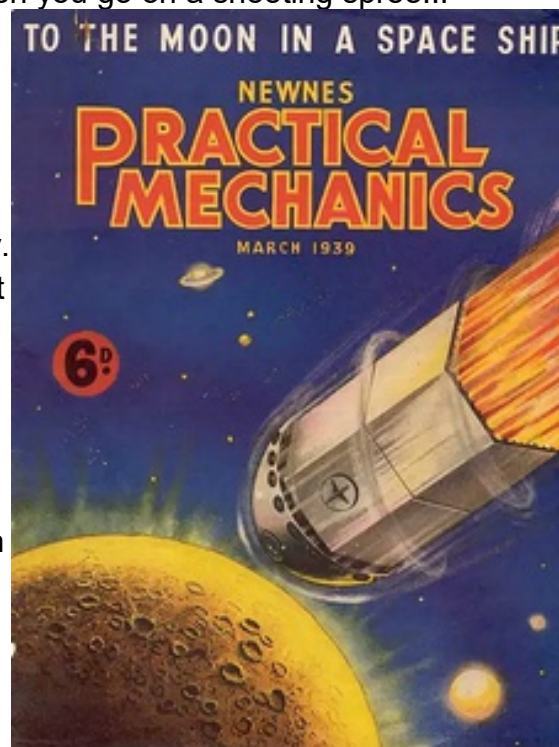
Unless it's a case of trying to pilfer some pedigree and pretending to have the cultural respect of literature and letters rather than superficial pixels of games. Let's have our stuff in our separate ways.

**Joe Siclari and Edie Stern:** Fanac.org, as well as eFanzine.com, are wonderful initiatives! Making old fanzines available and recording fandom's history are worthwhile projects. And it's in the nick of time as the traditional, real fen are getting old and are dying off one by one, I'm sad to say. Half of *Ansible* today is the RIP row... Traditional fandom is a unique structure and social phenomenon, which needs to be documented (something I do my best to do too). I'm not sure Fandom As We Know It will survive, but if its history is documented future generations will at least know about it and maybe find some nostalgic inspiration.

**Will Mayo:** "My country is a strange place" you say, adding "Serial killers roam". You seem not to be too happy with the gun-happiness of many Americans. I agree with that Americans have too many guns. I wouldn't like to see all guns in US citizens' hands removed but there are room for reforms. What the heck are they doing in eg Texas? They seem to revert to the Wild West of the 19th century. Extended background checks would be good and banning semi-automatics. If you are forced to make a special cocking move for every shot, you can't shoot as many when you go on a shooting spree... US news sources seem to be reporting one or two mass shootings per day. It's really bad! Another thing that makes the US strange is the lack of a comprehensive health care system, something that would have helped against corona. Obamacare was a step in the right direction, though unfortunately some politicians do their darndest to sabotage it. Health care shouldn't be a matter of money.

**Jefferson P Swycaffer:** The Royal Library newspaper archive isn't totally digitised yet, but they are working on it and what they have now is quite a lot. BTW, I met Poul Anderson on Seacon 1979, gave him my (crappy) fanzine, and later...received a LoC from him! Great guy! I say that not only from meeting him, but I really like his books. I'm not sure what you mean with DOS being good for cataloguing files. (Maybe the sub-directory structure which wasn't in 1.x but came with DOS2.x.) But what I liked is that DOS was fast, slim and easy to maintain since it didn't depend on hundreds of complicated system files and was free of unnecessary junk. I think there are benefits to both the straight and clear style of Asimov and the more expressional, blooming style of Vance. I have nothing against prologues that are there to tell something of the background of the story, but the prologue shouldn't *start* the plot. I agree the plot itself should start as late as possible, something eg Kurt Vonnegut often stressed.

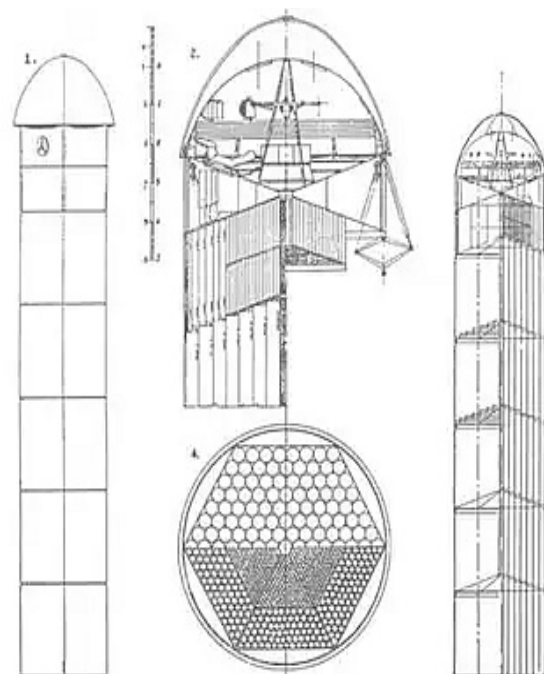
**Samuel Lubell:** As for what happens here in Sweden regarding the corona virus it is covered in my editorials. But one thing that makes me very irritated is that the politicians constantly move the goal posts for easing recommendations and "restrictions". Wonderful opening lines BTW! Have you phrased them? I agree with all those who note that the Hugo awards have become hugely Politically Correctly twisted! It wasn't exactly true that all ballots earlier were "unjustly filled with male writers". You have to consider that probably 90% of the most successful sf writers *were* males! It'd be only fair and justified if there were more of them on the ballots. Today, I'd estimate that, say, 60-75% of the most successful sf writers are male, so it then really becomes *totally unfair* if virtually no one of them are nominated or awarded. That's is discrimination. I'm sorry to say this, but "inclusiveness" is often extremely *excluding*. "Diversity" is often another word for discrimination, against all those "diversified" away. It would be for the better for all of us if this PC - not as in the IBM computer... - crowd would cool it. Don't they realise that every campaign they perform just gives Trump more followers? (Or over here more votes for these narrow-minded Sweden Democrats. Note: *not* affiliated with US



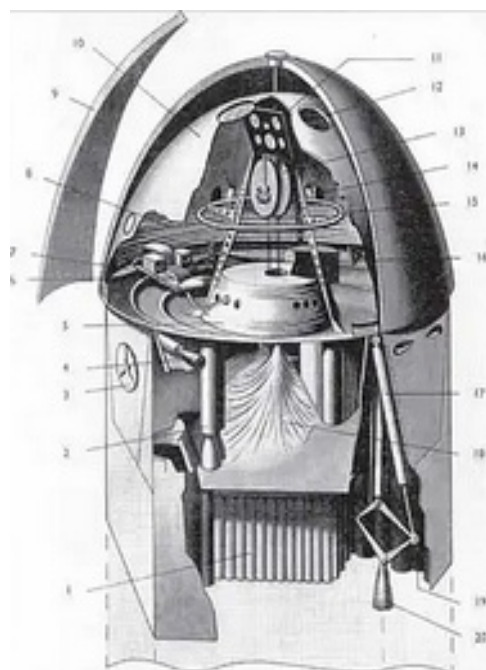
BIS moon project reaching the press.

Democrats.) Furthermore, I think the human brain is flexible enough to place itself in any situation and come up with any idea, so we don't need quotas for different groups to get different types of stories from different backgrounds. These attempts to cancel "cultural appropriation" is just dumb. A white person can and has the right to write a story about a black person (Heinlein did, for instance) and the other way around. After all, an sf writer may write a story from the viewpoint of a green Martian and can certainly with ease handle any version of a Homo Sapiens.

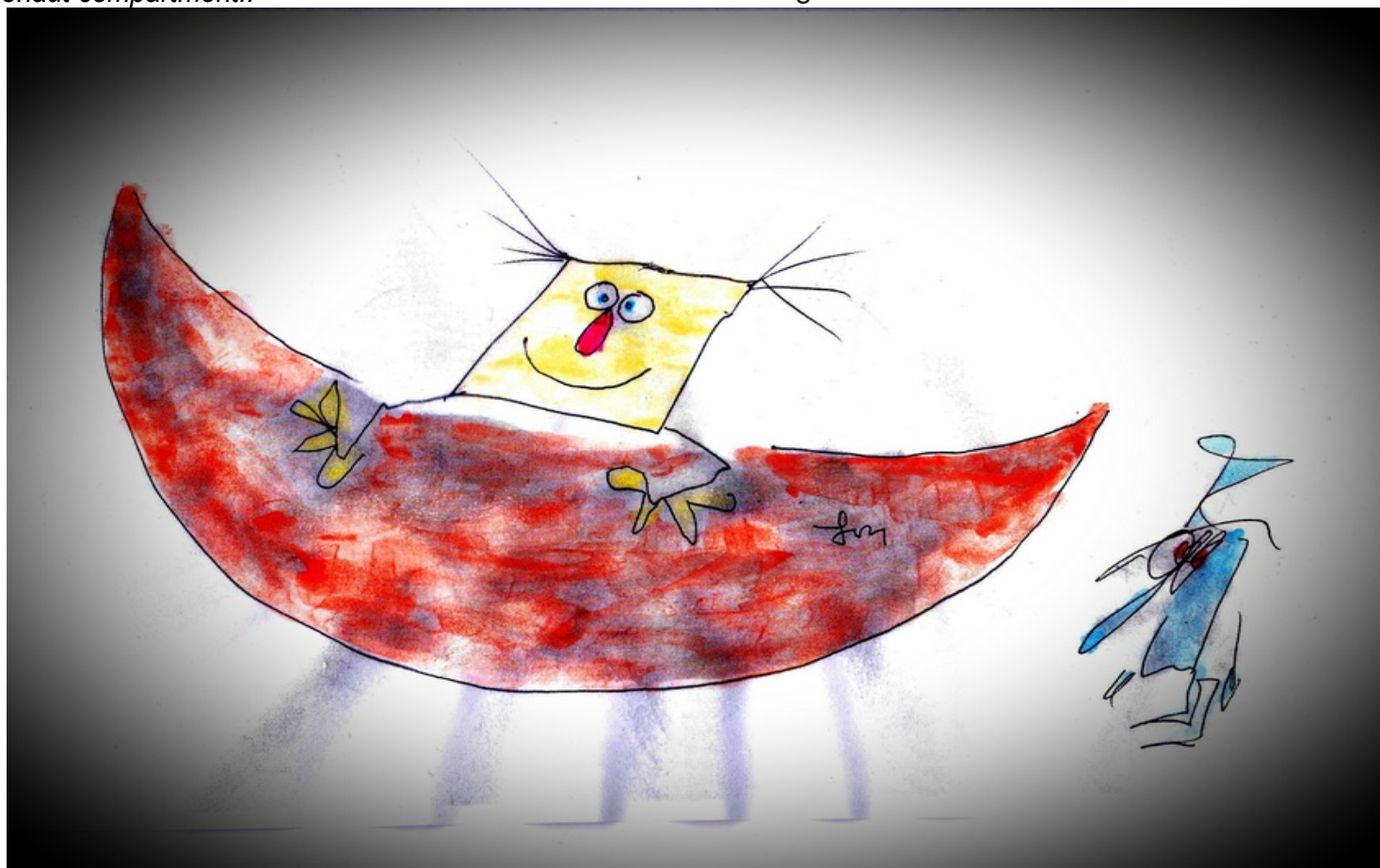
**George Phillies:** I come to think of the British Interplanetary Society. In 1939 (!) they did a study of a manned moon rocket. Arthur C Clarke was involved. They calculated it would be about the size and cost of a destroyer. They underestimated the difficulties, of course. They imagined to use solid rocket fuel bundled together in tubes, which would drop off as they were used. To me it seems their propulsion is too weak. See more: <https://www.airspacemag.com/space/hms-moon-rocket-3143/> But what would our world be, and the progress that can be made, without propellerheads speculating and dreaming! It may be debated, but for me John F Kennedy was one of the greatest US presidents, just because he believed we should "go to the Moon....not because they are easy, but because they are hard", which for instance laid the grounds for the Internet too.



*British Interplanetary Soc's 1939 moon rocket.*



*Close up of the BIS moonship astronaut compartment..*



*"The Moon isn't made of green cheese! It's made of water melon..." If we are to believe artist Lars "LON" Olsson.*



# INTERMISSION #110

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com) for EAPA, N'APA and some other Homo Fiawolensis. Follow @SFJournalen's newstweets on Nordic sf/f/h&fandom. SFJ is 6 decades of sf news! We demand a vote of No Con-fidence, no confidence in all typos! Early July, 2021.

## Editorially: Down with the Socialists...

As the pandemic is approaching rock bottom, from vaccine, warm weather and rising natural immunity, I'll leave that subject for now. Something more interesting is brewing. The Swedish parliament (called the Riksdag) June 21st voted for no confidence in Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, of the Social Democrats. (They are a sort of Socialists Light...or Dark or something)

It's the first time in "modern times" a sitting government has been kicked in the ass this way. (Not counting 1990 when the then S government proclaimed an economic package as a "cabinet question", ie a proposition so important that the government would resign if it wasn't voted through. It fell, the government resigned...but came back a couple of weeks later!)

The reason the Löfven government was kicked out is that their "passive support" from the Left Party (formerly the Communists) was withdrawn. And with that, there was enough support from the parties to the centre-right to oust Löfven - despite that they're not generally too fond of former Communists. The reason the Left Party left (no pun intended) Löfven is that the government to get support from two centre parties was to suggest investigating "market rents" for new housing (but not old). The housing situation, especially in Stockholm, is very pressed and an interesting situation (but I won't go into all that). And this brought down a government.



EXPRESSEN



### Osäkra S-mandatet kan ge makten åt Kristersson

Historisk nagelbitare väntar • S-ledamot misstänkt för rattfylleri kan bli Löfvens fall

Expressen June 24th: "Unsafe S Mandate May Give Power to Kristersson", ie the opposition leader. Missing MP Heikkinen Breitholtz (see #109) was stand-in for a minister who is now forced to resign & return to her Riksdag seat to perhaps save Löfven. Exciting power games...

Sweden uses parliamentarism, ie the government must have the support by the parliament, unlike eg the US where the president, not congress, appoints the government. More exactly, the Swedish government must be "tolerated" by the Riksdag which means it mustn't have 175 or more - a majority - votes against it in a vote of confidence. In no confidence vote they lost they had 181 votes against. The major newspaper Expressen recently noted that the missing S MP Sara Heikkinen Breitholtz may result in opposition leader Ulf Kristersson from the Moderates to become PM. It would be natural for the speaker to nominate him, and the Social Democrats + support parties can without Ms H-B only muster 174 votes. (News: S moves to take back the vote, letting a minister return to the Riksdag.) I wouldn't be too keen to take the reins, since it's just one year until next ordinary election and at the end of the epidemic one just risks getting the blame for all done wrong. But then the only parties I know are room parties.

Finding a new government could be hard. Löfven doesn't want a snap election (he'll stay with a caretaker government for a while) but one may come anyway, if the speaker of parliament can't find a candidate the chamber will tolerate, and there're eight parties and no clear majority. There are three



parties to the left and five to the right. But two parties to "the right" are also more "centre" and have passively backed the ousted government. And one party to the right, the infamous, xenophobic Sweden Democrats, has a low degree of tolerance from most of the others and are seen as loose cannons... It may end in a snap election, which would happen in September or October (which would only result in a mandate until next ordinary election in 2022).

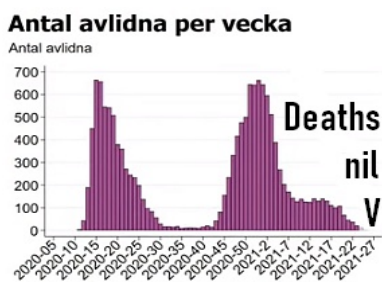
Not that I care very much. I'm not a great fan of politicians. Sure, we should have some politicians but they should have less power, and more power must be with the individual citizen. But I hope this illustrious gang of politruks now will be too occupied so they will let the remaining, unnecessary anti-virus measures lapse.

Those are of little benefit, but with huge medical risks! A recent scary headline, even if it's about the UK: "NHS facing 'biggest pressure in history' as 12 million await treatment",

<https://www.theweek.co.uk/news/science-health/953208/nhs-facing-biggest-pressure-in-history-with-12-million-awaiting>. The latest Swedish figure I saw a couple of months back was that over 1 million were awaiting medical treatment here, and it's now probably 1.5 million - who have to wait for



*Despite good spirit (on the table) and masking his feelings (and mouth) PM Stefan Löfven lost the no confidence vote, initiated by Noshi Dadgostar to the right...eh, the Left, the party she leads.*



*Deaths virtually nil! Public Health Agency 1 July.*

*operations, diagnoses, medical treatment of all types!*

The politicians over-cautious pandemic measures have turned hospitals away from their ordinary work and scared people from seeking care. This is a huge medical problem, which I suspect will cost many, many more lives than the corona virus. Millions denied or waiting for medical treatment will cause many early deaths – much more than this virus, which nearly everyone recovers from and now is stopped by weather, herd immunity and vaccines. (Damage to economy, education, mental health etc not counted.)

I suspect that people being dead tired of Löfven's opportunistic pandemic mismanagement has played some role in ousting him. The latest figures of virus deaths are virtually nil, almost all in risk groups and a majority of others are vaccinated, and to this comes rising natural immunity and summer with virus killing UV radiation.

Fortunately, the Midsummer celebrations - a huge thing here! - are mostly outdoors so it wasn't too much affected. And the small frogs jumped mask-less.

*--Ahrvid Engholm*

## “X Files” à la Suede

We learn that a local film company calling themselves Crazy Pictures, which earlier did the Sweden-is-invaded movie “The Unthinkable” (alternate history makes it skiffy!) now plans a flying saucer flick called “UFO Sweden” (or rather “UFO Sverige”, it'll be shot in Swedish”). It's described as a new version of the “The X Files” and it'll be co-produced by the big film company SF Studios. Variety writes, <https://variety.com/2021/film/global/ufo-sweden-sf-studios-crazy-pictures-1234990612/>



*The Archive for the Unexplained, inspiring a film.*

*Described as a mix between X-Files and Stranger Things, "UFO Sweden is set in a small town and follows a teenage rebel placed in foster care, who suspects that her father is not dead, but has been kidnapped by UFOs. With the help from a UFO association, she is determined to find out the truth. Crazy Pictures got the idea for the film after learning about UFO-Sweden, which investigates mysterious phenomena and manages the world's largest UFO archive, Archives for the Unexplained in Norrköping, Sweden.*

UFO-Sweden/Sverige is the national organisation for people hunting flying kitchenware. And they do have this huge archive in the city of Norrköping, spread out on - as I understand - a dozen rented sites. It's quite packed with stuff of everything esoteric or "unexplained". They have also collected some sf material. Sam J Lundwall donated boxes of it, despite - which he once exclaimed with a glee - that he also upon retiring collected a lot of archive stuff and "shipped to the dump to have it burnt!"

They will begin shooting this autumn and premiere will be around Xmas time 2022 - provided of course that politicians get real and don't extend virus shite beyond that... I know Clas Svahn, former chairman of UFO-Sweden, who says everything is as yet a bit hush-hush, but the film is inspired by the organisation. There's a lot of buzz around UFOs right now because of the US government report (ordered by D Trump BTW, in an attempt to find even more conspiracies I guess). I've seen some of the shaky film clips of strange objects, and to at least me many of them simply look like electronic flitter in the instruments. But then I've never been I big fan of this Däniken stuff.

I'm more fond of von Donegan from Bob Shaw's serious scientific talks.



But Von Donegan can explain!

## Poetry & Rheligion

I've been a follower of Roscoe for almost all my fannish career, you know this divine beaver Ghod that Art Rapp discovered in 1949. Below are Hholy Vhereses about Roscoe, from Phropheet Rapp. I asked my poetic friend Comet-John Benzene jr to make a Swedish translation, so local fans can become chonverts and on the Ultimatae Day of the 200th Fandom be taken by Roscoe in his shimmering rocket to the Perfect Fandom.

Mr Benzene agreed. "Provided you make space also for another piece I just also scribbled down," he said. "Note that I used some 'half rhymes' - va/hav, fjärde/färder etc - to more closely preserve the message. I'm sure the Nobel committee will be impressed!"

The Swedish version to the left, the original to the right.

FROM THE SACRED WRITINGS OF ROSCOE  
by Art Rapp, 1949 (the English original)

### FRÅN ROSCOES HELIGA SKRIFTER

by Art Rapp, 1949, translation Comet-John Benzene jr

*Det finns en witter ung bäver; Roscoe är bäverns namn,  
han syns vara som varje bäver, men för oss säkert i hamn  
ty alla andra är ju bruna, eller lerigt gråa-blå,  
men när du blickar upp på Roscoe, finns inget att titta på*

*Han kan inte ej ses i vatten, ej heller uti luft,  
och om han inte bet dig, du såg han som en bluff,  
Men hans tänder är som mejslar och gör du icke rätt,  
Roscoe vet det genast och ger benet ditt ett bett*

*Roscoe vakar över fansen varhelst de nu må va',  
från dalgångar och öken, från berg och över hav.  
Det är en snäll och hjälpsam bäver, får fans ta friska tag,  
han förtjänar allt tillbejdan på var Helig Bäverdag.*

*Dessa dagar äro två, en juli den fjärde  
dagen Roscoe i sitt rymdskepp är på himmelsfärder.  
Till hans ära denna dag skall råda fannisk vapenvila,  
och varje sann adept skall till sf-kongressen ila*

There exists a gay young beaver, Roscoe is this beaver's name,  
and he seems like most young beavers, but he isn't quite the same,  
for although the rest are brownish, or a muddy greyish-blue,  
when you take a look at Roscoe, why the look goes right on thru!

He cannot be seen in water, he cannot be seen in air,  
and if he didn't bite you, you would vow he wasn't there.  
But his teeth are keen as chisels and if you commit a sin,  
Roscoe will find out about it, and he'll bite you on the shin.

Roscoe watches out for stfen wheresoever they may be,  
from the canyons to the desert, from the mountains to the sea.  
He's a kind and helpful beaver, aiding fen in many ways,  
and he merits fannish worship on the Sacred Beaver Days.

These days are two in number: one's the fourth day of July  
it's the day when Roscoe flies a fiery spaceship in the sky.  
In his honor, on that date, a truce should fall on fan dissension,  
and every true disciple should assemble in convention.

*Den andra dagen är Labor Day, dagen Roscoe föddes,  
då hyllningar till honom hela fandom överströddes,  
då alla fans skall träffas och prata om gångna årets bröl  
och skall utbringa skål för Roscoe i gudomligt, gyllne öhl.*

*Roscoe hjälper troende, från första till den sista,  
det toge triljarder dagar om man dem alla skulle lista:  
han ger Tryckfelsnisse sparken; han ger stadgar mera  
stadga*

*stencilpennor rullar ej av bordet där de är förlagda*

*Han får mimeon trycka läsligt, får färgbanden att räcka,  
han stoppar krönikörers historielögner fräcka;  
han kättrar in i tidningskiosken, efter sf-blaskor trålar,  
och får fanen att dem finna med telepatiska strålar,*

*Roscoe kryper i trånga prång där skatter finns ibland  
och trots damm och mörker styr han fanens sökarhand  
såden missar de mondäna värdelösta verken  
och får fram den guldklimp som sf-hyllan stärker*

*Och Roscoe faller hökar'ns giriga ögons markis  
så man säljer sf-böcker till hälften av avsett pris,  
och Roscoe vet vad du önskar så när du boken fick  
får han den, ock magasinen, bli i allra bästa skick.*

*Och många andra favörer ges sanna, trogna fans  
som dyrkar och säger Roscoe den bästa som fanns,  
som bevis att följa Roscoes väg, den ärofulla,  
skickar de in namnen till Roscoes hedersrulla.*

More in Fancyclopedia about Roscoe: <https://fancyclopedia.org/Roscoe>

Alas, as promised, I'm afraid I'm forced to also present another piece by the illustrious Comet-John. But what the heck is this fishy thing "ABBA"? Is it something you can eat? Like, something in a jar? Who knows...

## **THANK YOU FOR THE SKIFFY**

**By Comet-John Benzene Jr**

**(earlier version by ABBA as "Thank You for the Music")**

*I'm rather special, in fact I'm a bit of a slant  
If I tell you jokes you probably want them all banned  
And I have a talent and here is a hint  
You cannot stop reading when I am in print  
I write the fanzines galore  
All I want is to do it some more!  
So I say thank you for the skiffy, the stars that's gleaming  
Thanks for rockets spacewards streaming  
Who can live without it? I ask from my cosmic mind  
What would we find  
Without fanzines and the fans, we'd be blind!  
So I say thank you for the skiffy  
For giving it to me*

The second day is Labor Day, the date of Roscoe's birth, when tribute should be paid him over all the fannish Earth, when all fen shall meet their fellows to look back upon the year and shall drink a toast to Roscoe in that other great ghod Ebeer.

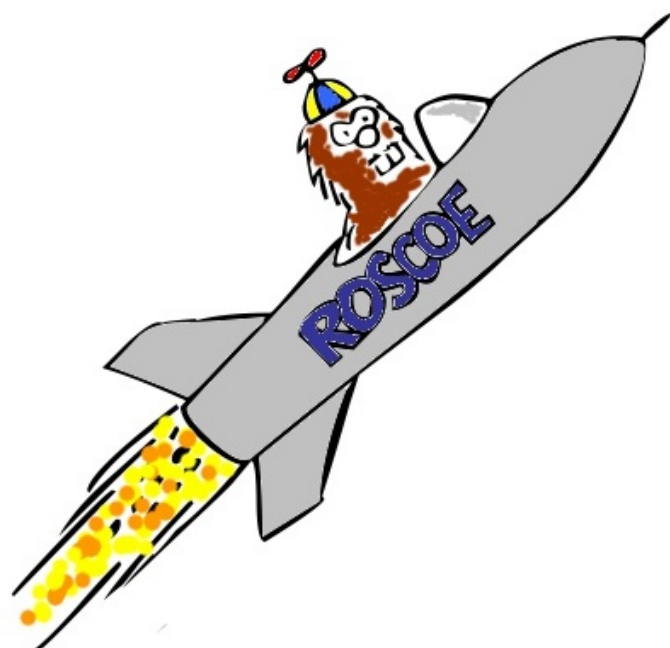
Nbw, Roscoe helps his followers in many, many ways; just to list them would consume about a hundred billion days: he reduces typing errors; he makes fandub laws more stable; he keeps laid-down pens and styli from a-rolling off the table.

He makes mimeos print legibly, makes typer ribbons last; he keeps hacks from pulling boners when they're writing of the past; he climbs into crowded newsstands, ferrets out the stfsh zines, and attracts the fan's attention via telepathic beams.

Roscoe crawls in cluttered corners where the bookstores' treasures stand and despite the dust and darkness guides the groping fannish hand that it misses the obscuring mass of mundane, worthless books and brings up the rare edition for which every stfan looks.

And it's Roscoe who puts blinkers on the greedy dealers' eyes so they sell their stf like other pulps, at half the cover price, and it's Roscoe who takes cognizance of what you're always wishin' and arranges that you and the mag in perfect mint condition.

And many other boons befall those true and faithful fen who agree that Roscoe merits being honoured among men, and to prove that they are striving to full the Roscoe Goal, submit their names for listing on the Roscoe Honor Roll.





*Hugo said I was 124C41*

*plus Willis said my puns were second to none*

*And I often wondered who made it all start*

*Surely that fellow was incredibly smart*

*I sense a wonderous man*

*Well, whoever it was - I'M A FAN!*

*So I say...*

*I've done my fanac, I am the boy with inkstained hands*

*I want to crank it out for everybody*

*Do fanzines. Write a Loc. Be a fan!*

*Thank you for the skiffy...*



## New Human Species Found

Paleoanthropology and researching the human family tree has made huge progress in recent years. We found the mini man *Homo Floresiensis*, nicknamed the hobbit, and also a finger in Siberia. It might not seem much but you could extract DNA from it, and by DNA analysis - by a group lead by Svante Pääbo of Sweden - it was shown to be a finger of a new *Homo* species, named Denisovians from the cave where the finger was found.

Both were contemporary with us *Homo Sapiens*, who BTW has had her history prolonged as remains found in Morocco were shown to be 300 000 years old (before this *Homo Sapiens* was thought to have appeared 150-200 000 years ago). Genes from our third contemporary the Neanderthals have by the Pääbo group been found to be partially mixed into ours.

(Especially in cancel culture proponents, I'd suggest...). At least four members of the *Homo* family lived on Earth at the same time! But it could be five! An old skull find from WWII time has re-surfaced in China, which could be a new member of our family tree. *New Scientist* writes,

[https://www.newscientist.com/article/2282223-dragon-man-claimed-as-](https://www.newscientist.com/article/2282223-dragon-man-claimed-as-new-species-of-ancient-human-but-doubts-remain/)

[new-species-of-ancient-human-but-doubts-remain/](https://www.newscientist.com/article/2282223-dragon-man-claimed-as-new-species-of-ancient-human-but-doubts-remain/)

*The nearly complete human skull had an elongated cranium from which a heavy brow bone protruded, shading the gaping squares that once housed eyes. And then there was the skull's unusual size: "It's enormous," says paleoanthropologist Chris Stringer of London's Natural History Museum.*

*Perhaps aware of the magnitude of the find, the man secreted the skull away in an abandoned well. Now, nearly 90 years later, a study published in the journal *The Innovation* makes the case that this skull represents a new human species: *Homo longi*, or the Dragon Man. Two additional studies reveal that the stunningly preserved cranium likely came from a male that died at least 146,000 years ago. Its mashup of both ancient and more modern anatomical features hints at a unique placement on the human family tree.*

Now we only wait for finding remains of fancient fen! I've heard they are preparing an expedition, lead by the famous professor Von Donegan, that will excavate camp sites for old fannish tribes, according to legends and reader letters in 1926 *Amazing Stories*, in the woods known as Forest Ackerman.

Here they have earlier found a piece of bone resembling a stencil stylus, presumably crafted by our fancestors, and pieces of flint carefully formed into primitive spaceships. In a nearby cave, wall paintings were also discovered resembling prehistoric room parties, made in ochre and charcoal. All this has earlier been covered in documentaries by film makers Hanna and Barbera.

But we already know that fancient fan could craft stencils from thinly hammered hide and make a primitive mimeo from buffalo bones and carved out stocks. Aside from being able to brew bheer. chemical analysis has also shown they could make a corflu-like mix from herbs and beaver secretion (That could be the roots to the Roscoe cult.) But how this cultural quantum leap came about is still largely unknown. There are even speculations that early fen had contacts with aliens from space, a theory proposed by one wacky Dr Clarke who suggests we civilised by a big, black block of stone.



*Reconstruction of dragon man.*

*Hey, you can't take a selfie with a piece of rock, stupid!*



Let's hope answers can be found in the hunt for Homo Fiawolensis!

# History Corner

Time for some more sf and fan history, from the vaults of His Royal Majesty's Library in Stockholm and its digital newspaper archive. *Intermission* has for a long time had lots of this stuff, and I'll continue (on a smaller scale than with the ten recent history issues) as long as there's interesting stuff left among the thousands of newspaper clips saved. Nordic readers may try to read the originals, pasted in as illos (they may be a bit blurry for technical reasons) but for those who have no clue about the lingo of the kind, considerate and peaceful Vikings I'll make translations and/or summaries.

First a report from an sf con I myself was involved in. Me and some buddies did two cons we called Conscience, in 1993 and 1995 in Stockholm. Medium-sized by our



Did we have pre-historic space contacts with aliens this way? (From comic book *The Hedehöns Kids in Space*, a sort of Swedish version of the *Flintstones*, by Bertil Almquist.)

## Sf som sektträff

Rymden har förlorat i dragningskraft, men för författarna blir verkligheten alltmer spännande. Science fiction-romaner säljer i stora upplagor men de riktiga fantasterna är få till antalet. På internationella Sf-kongressen möttes de i underjorden för att prata om framtiden och äta nötter.

På väg in passerar jag en oansenlig port, en smal korridor och går med försiktiga steg nedför en osäker spiraltrappa. Det känns som att kliva in i ett skyddsrum, unken luft sticker i näsan, det är skumt, men i trappan hörs musik som är så mild att den bara kan vara skapad av en person, drömmaren Ralph Lundsten. Smekande ljud från rymden, sfärernas musik, vägleder besökaren ned i den lilla boulehallen på söder i Stockholm, där en tredagars internationell science fiction-kongress, *Conscience 95*, ska hållas mitt på gruset.

Estetiskt sett är det helt rätt att förlägga en sf-händelse till just en underjordisk lokal. Bra sf-litteratur förmedlar ofta en obehaglig känsla av att vara instängd i rummet och tiden. Men underjorden är också en talande metafor för den klassiska sf-litteraturens ställning i går och ännu mer i dag. Det som var vetenskapens visionära frontlinje har på ett drygt decennium överträffats – av verkligheten. Rymden har dessutom forlorat i dragningskraft. Istället för utåt vänds den litterära sf-kongressen inåt mot den minsta rymden, mot elektronikkens svarta hål, datarymden.

En sf-kongress av i dag borde ha framtiden för sig, nu när William Gibson's cyberspace-trilogi gjort rymdlitteratur rumsren, men tvärtom verkar glansdagarna ligga en bra bit bakåt i tiden. I flera debatter under de tre dagarna är vi knappt fler i publiken än i panelen, och då är det inte enbart esoteriska ämnen på dagordningen: futuristisk litteratur, rymden som den sista vildmarken, digital sf, litauisk sf.

Amerikanen Norman Spinrad har rest från sitt hem i Paris för att berätta för oss sju-tio personer om sina kontroversiella böcker, inte minst om *The Iron Dream* från 1972, en fiktiv sf-roman av Adolf Hitler. På bokens omslag skulle egentligen ha stått Hitlers namn, men förlaget fick stora skälvan och istället blev det "Norman Spinrad presents Adolf Hitler's Hugo Award winning SF Classic *The Iron Dream*". Boken övermattes till tyska men hamnade omedelbart på indexlistan, och där är den fortfarande. Den får säljas men inte öppna, bara under disk.

Spinrads böcker har provocerat många, också trogna sf-läsare. Som en av frontfigurerna för den amerikanska motsvarigheten till Englands new wave-rörelse blev bans

sf-romaner, med inslag av sex, våld, politisk satir och pseudopsykologi, ofta förtalade. Böckerna handlade inte om rymdskepp utan om förtryckta planeter och makttinrigar, något som under det kalla kriget ansågs alltför verklighetsstroget för att helt viftas bort som fantasier.

William Gibson och andra cyberpunkförfattare som Bruce Sterling och John Shirley började i det tidiga 80-talet att skriva mörka framtidsberättelser med mättad prosa och minimal intrig. Men detta var inte, som ibland påstås, ett brött mot traditionell sf utan snarare en litteratur som väl förvaltar ett arv. Cyberpunkens rötter förgrenar sig i många håll: men återfinns också inom sf, hos amerikanerna Spinrad och Harlan Ellison men kanske mer hos britterna Michael Moorcock och J. G. Ballard, två av genrens språkliga och tematiskt allra främsta nyskapare.

Det nya som hände under 80-talet var att de fysiska och psykologiska inslagen i sf kompletterades med bioteknik och motkraften från punkrörelsen. Människa och teknik förenades och rymden fick på ett annat sätt än tidigare en inre, levande och oroväckande tidstypisk dimension.

Trots att somliga författare skriver emaljligt populära böcker är genrens verkliga fantasier få till antalet, inte fler än några tusental världen över. **Sf-fandom**, den informella rörelsen av fans, har i Sverige existerat sedan tidigt 50-tal då tidningen *Uppått* uppstod och för en tid blev fanens gemenskapens nav. De mest aktiva började träffas i små, interna klubbar där man diskuterade filosofi och rymdlitteratur och i stället för kongressmat drack te och åt nötter, något som återfyller blivet ett signum för svenskt **fandom**.

Acheivd Eogholm är arrangör av konfe-

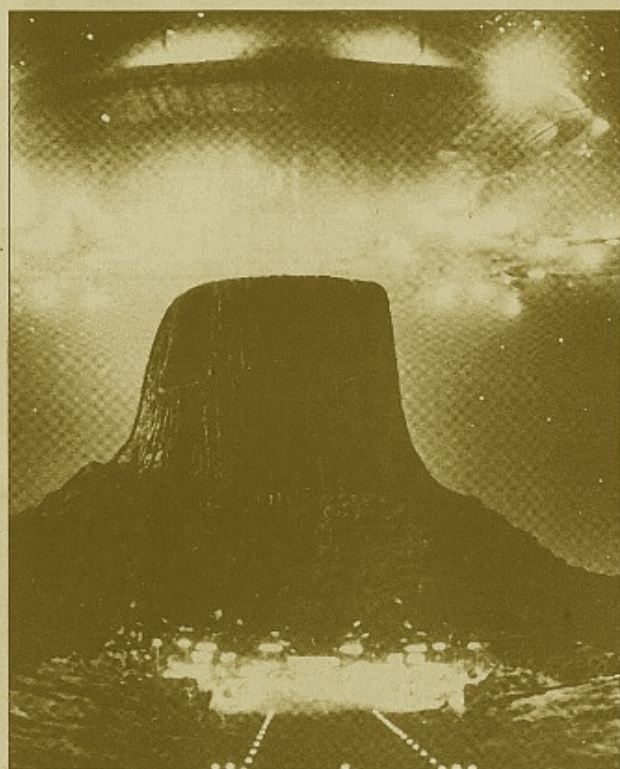


**Fiktivt mörker.** I mörka källarlokaler möts science-fictionfantasterna för att fundera över den mörkande framtiden och nya elektroniska landvinningar. De har landat i Utopia. Här är det själva verkligheten som förändras. Övan har Johnny (Keanu Reeves), i filmen *Johnny Mnemonic*, lagrat 320 gigabyte stulen data i hjärnan.

rensen och tillika ett äkta sf-fan. Han ger ut små, stencilerade fanzines med artiklar mestadels skrivna av honom själv. Han är ett världsnamn i de underjordiska kretsarna och en centralgestalt i Sverige, även om han inte alls vill framstå som märkvärdig. Den familjära och ganska oprofessionella stämningen runt kongressen ger en känsla av släktträff, eller skulle man säga sektträff, för på många sätt liknar intresset för rymden en religion.

Nom musikens science fiction finns framför allt ett världsnamn, Ralph Lundsten. Han är föreståndare och stjärnguide i sitt rosa *Andromeda* i Saltsjö-Boo, en inspelningsstudio som tillika är ett galaktiskt rike med egen ambassad. Lundsten ägnar sig i högsta grad åt det främmande men hans framtidssyn liknar ingen annans: när andra under kongressen talar om transnationella storförtegar säger han att ande och material är ett och odelbart, mot en allt hårdare värld konstrar han med att framtiden tvärtom ser ljus ut, och ljusare blir den för den som lyssnar till rymdmusik från *Andromeda*.

På sitt eget sätt tar Ralph Lundstens uppenbarligen framtiden på allvar, men han är ett undantag. Den hissande känslan i sf – i böcker, filmer och spel – ligger annars i glappet mellan fakta och fiktion, i skildringar som är så överklaga att de nästan verkar troliga.



**Ohjälpligt passé.** Flygande tefat är inget för dagens Science fiction-entusiaster.

Det faktum att muren föll i Östeuropa var, tycker somliga, nästan som att uppleva sf i verkligheten. Kommunismen störtades och alla väntade på ett utopia, men istället började det spricka och sedan har det blöstat upp tidigare opptäckta konflikthårdar i både öst och väst.

Den internationella panelen med deltagare från Litauen, Ukraina, Ryssland, Frankrike, USA och Sverige hade förstärkt olika svar på frågan vad som gick fel, men ingen åsikt var lika disluteabel som Norman Spinrads. För honom var det glasklart: Lösningen på det före detta Sovjetunionens problem heter Sovjetunionen, liksom ett åter-skapande av Jugoslavien löser kriget i det forna Jugoslavien. De östeuropeiska gästerna var artiga och nöjde sig med att höja ögonbrynen eller lämna lokalerna.

När sf-fantaster konfronterats med en föränderlig verklighet börjar det ofta gnissla, förr eller senare. Det senaste exemplet är cyberpunkförfattarna som beskylls för att teckna en drogdränkt och föga positiv framtidsbild. I själva verket har de bara fantasiserat utifrån vad de redan ser omkring

sig och mixat gatukulturens artefakter på ett ovanligt attraktivt sätt. De är knappast skyldiga till den kalla datortekniken, även om böckerna lämnat bestående bidrag till designen och vokabulären.

Vad som däremot hotar sf som litterär genre är att den tid vi lever i erbjuder långt större, mer provocerande och revolutionerande förändringar än de mest spektakulära romanerna.

Det florerar till exempel en hypotes om att människan inte är skapelsens krona utan det näst senaste steget i utvecklingskedjan, nödvändig bara för att uppnå datorn och roboten. Tanken är orimlig, visst, men inte helt vettlös, inte med tanke på att människan själv konstruerar en artificiell intelligens som ska överträffa vår egen.

Verkligheten har förändrats, och därmed också fantasin. Om sf som litterär form kommer att ha en plats framöver är därför snarare en fråga om hur väl den kan tolka samtiden, inte framtiden.

Sven Ränlund



standards (around 100 attendees) and both were also what we called Baltcons, a regional con series for Baltic Sea countries running for about 15 years in the 90's and 00's. (But fizzling out in the late 00's due to lack of interest and need - most Baltic countries joined the EU, travel and fan contacts became easier and fen could just as well attend the Eurocon and ordinary skiffy cons.) In 1993 GoH was Jerry Pournelle, and I know some think he is a descendant of Genghis Kahn but I should tell you that he was a perfect gentleman and quite interesting (and he was also an old fan, you know).

In 1995 we had Norman Spinrad, an fascinating guy (who I once visited in Paris, ie he was away but the wife was home) and famous for eg *The Iron Dream* and *Bug Jack Barron* (a novel of some interest in an era of a certain Trump). Though the con worked reasonably well, the 1995 con got some slightly raised eyebrows for the venue having a floor of packed sand... It's not easy to find the perfect venue, as you know. Hotels are usually too expensive. Local council facilities usually ban bars, with no understanding of fandom's traditional thirst for bheer. We found this sports site in a big cellar, which already had their licenced, reasonably priced bar. It was a club for the French game of boule, where you throw metal balls landing in sand, you know Boule has become a popular summer game here. It's played in the parks and this sports hall could also offer it winter time. I remember we lost a lot of money on the '95 con (concom passed a hat, with a big hat size for Yours Truly...) as we gave a lot of subsidies to Eastern European fans to turn up - over 20 did!, from the Baltic States, Ukraine, Romania, Poland etc. But the dates. Smack in vacation time weren't perhaps the best.

I did the con PR and managed to get some articles and mentions in the newspapers, radio interviews and so on. Internet was new and all the rage, though few were connected I remember I did a lot of net-PR. The papers had just begun getting E-mail, so I could bombard them at a time few others did!. But I didn't see this piece before (prev page), from Göteborgs-Posten August 12 1995, "Sf As a Sect Meet":

*Space has lost its attraction, but reality becomes increasingly exciting for the writers. Sf novels sell in huge numbers, but the real fans are few. On an international sf convention in Stockholm they met underground to talk about the future and eat nuts. On the way in I passed a modest gate and carefully descended a spiral staircase. It feels like entering a bomb shelter. Stale air enters the nostrils, in the low light music is heard which is so mild it can only come from one person, the dreamer Ralph Lundsten. A soothing sound from space, music of the spheres, directs the visitor down into the boule hall in Stockholm's Southern district, where a three-day international sf con, Conscience 95, is held in the sand. Aesthetically it's quite right to arrange an sf event in an underground site. Good sf literature often conveys an eerie feeling to be locked in time and space. But the underground is also a metaphor for the situation for sf yesterday and even more today. What earlier was the the visionary frontline of science has in just over a decade been surpassed by reality. Space has also lost its attraction. Instead if turned outwards the literary telescope is turned inwards, towards the smallest space, the black hole of electronics, computer space. An sf con of today should be something for the future now when William Gibson's cyberspace trilogy made space literature kosher, but to the opposite it seems the golden days were yesterday. For many debates during the days we are not that many more listening than in the panels, and it isn't only esoteric subjects covered: futuristic literature, space as the last frontier, digital sf, sf from Lithuania. The American*

## Vampyrer, varulvar drar in på kåren

□ Just som Stockholm började stänga till pingst länslät sig bleka och sammanbitna personer i Kärhusets hörsal på Hollandargatan till en alldeles egen sorts härryckning.

Fjärran från solskin, fåglalåt och jordiska trivialiteter satte de sig att lyssna till märkliga sagor om fantomer och vampyrer, kosmiska äventyr och interstellära katastrofer.

Det var Sveriges sciencefictionister till ett antal av tvåhundra män och ett fåtal kvinnor som möttes till FANCON 2. Varvid CON stod för kongress och FAN inte hade med vanligt jävelskap att göra utan fastmer var det engelska ordet för entusiast. Tvåtan betydde inget särskilt, den stod där ändå eftersom nuffror nu en gång hör till i sciencefiction.

### □ Unga Entusiaster

Entusiasterna var övervägande unga, utom Carl Johan Holzhäusen, som är en bit över de sjuttio, få journalist vid Hjärtens Göteborgs-Posten och numera som pensionär en av våra mest uppskattade sciencefictionförfattare.

Svenska akademien för sciencefiction, en något fläskare upplaga av de vanliga Aderton, kommer under FANCON:s förlopp att tilldela honom 1974 års Sciencefiction-stipendium, en gubbe smidd i vanligt jordiskt trä.

Kongressen hade mjukstartat redan på bilpingsstation genom att titta på sciencefictionfilmen "Varulven jagar Frankenstein", ett verk av sådan enstående uselhet, enligt kongressordförande John-Henri Holmberg, att det blivit ett ständigt inslag på alla SF-sammankomster.

### □ Groparna imponerade

Man hade därefter tittat på stan, dess näringsställen och uppscendevärande gropar i topografien. Kongressens utländska hedersgäst, engelsmannen Brian W Aldiss, en av resarna i den internationella sciencefictionlitteraturen, var klart imponerad såväl av utminueringen som groparna.

Det föreföll som om han väl kunde tänka sig att förlägga sin nästa fantastiska roman till denna gästrika men surrealistiskt söndertuggade huvudstad.

Sven Christer Swahn, lundensisk kulturperson och yngre bror till Jan Öyvind Swahn, den lärde i Lund, var svensk högtalare vid kongressen. Han har skrivit böcker om åtskilligt, bl a såväl om staden Lund som om Fritiof Nilsson Piraten, och har alltså ett ut-



Sven Christer Swahn, science fictionist från Lund i begrunden inför en avert ur genten.

vecklat sinne för det fantastiska både i verkligheten och dikten.

Efter att redan som pojke ha låtit sig fascineras av Tarzan, apornas son, har han nu på medelålders blivit övertygad sciencefictionist och utgett böcker som "Vår män i Nyhavn", en omtumlande berättelse om en skånsk journalist som dröjer sig kvar på Nyhavn 17 och uppdagar att Köpenhamns formilgen kryllar av atlantider, det vill säga ättlingar till innebyggarna på det sjunkna Atlantida.

Mången svensk som stannat över natten i Nyhavn har ju misstänkt något liknande, men ingen har i skrift lyckats framställa det så övertygande som Sven Christer.

### □ Debatt på engelska

Om detta talade han dock inte till kongressen, utan läste i stället halvhögt ur manuskriptet till vad som i höst skall utkomma som bok om svensk sciencefiction. Den första genomlysande sammanfattningen av konstarten, ansåg sig kongressordförande Holmberg kunna garantera redan i förväg.

Den allmänhet som vill veta mer om vad sciencefiction egentligen är har en chans kl 12 på annandagen på Kärhuset. Då diskuteras Brian Aldiss, Sven Christer Swahn m fl med sig själva och med publiken om "Sciencefiction - underhållning eller budskap". För att Aldiss skall ha en chans i debatten talar man på engelska.



Norman Spinrad has travelled from his home in Paris to tell people about his controversial books, not the least *The Iron Dream* from 1972, a fictitious sf novel by Adolf Hitler. The cover would have had Hitler's name, but the publisher became very worried and instead it read "Norman Spinrad presents Adolf Hitler's Hugo Award winning SF Classic *The Iron Dream*". The book was translated to German but was immediately put on the index list where it still is. It means it can be sold but not openly, only under the counter. Spinrad's books have provoked many. As one of the front figures of England's New Wave movement his sf novels with portions of sex, violence, political satire and pseudo psychology were often slammed. The books weren't about spaceships but about oppressed planets and power struggles, something that during the cold war was seen as too realistic to be ignored as fantasies. William Gibson and other cyberpunk authors like Bruce Sterling and John Shirley began writing dark future stories in the early 80's, with stark prose and a minimum of plot. But this wasn't as often claimed breaking the traditions but rather literature which well nurtures its heritage. The roots of cyberpunk comes from many directions but are also from sf, with the Americans Spinrad and Harlan Ellison but perhaps more from the Brits Michael Moorcock and JG Ballard, two of the most inventive and strong in language and theme in the genre. The new thing happening during the 1980s was that physical and psychological parts of sf were completed with biotech and the counter culture of the punk movement. Man and technology were merged and space obtained an inner, living and worrying dimension in another way than before. Though some authors write incredibly popular books, the real fantasists of the genre are rather few. Not more than a few thousand world-wide /thinking of the attendees of a Worldcon, probably/. Sf fandom, the informal movement of fans, has existed in Sweden since the early 1950's when the magazine *Häpna!* Came about and for a time became the hub for the fans. The most active began to meet in small internal clubs where they discussed philosophy and space literature and instead of convention food drank tea and ate peanuts /Lars-Olov Strandberg's treat/ something that since have become a symbol for fandom. Åhrvid Engholm is one of the convention organisers and also a real sf fan. He publishes small, stencilled fanzines with articles mostly written by himself /well, at the time I did news in the SFJ newszine, usually not articles, print run actually near 300! Sorry for the next claim, not coming from me.../ His name is known world-wide in these underground circles and he's a central figure in Sweden, though he doesn't want to claim to be any special. The familiar but unprofessional atmosphere around the convention gives a feeling of a family affair, or one could say sect meeting, because interest in space resembles religion in many ways. In the sf of music there's one name of world reputation, Ralph Lundsten. He's manager and star guide for pink Andromeda in Saltsjö-Boo, a recording studio which also is a galactic realm with its own embassy. Lundsten has to a high degree dealt with the alien, but his views of the future are unlike others: when others during the convention talk about big, transnational corporations, he says that spirit and matter is one and indivisible, against a tough world he replies with that the future looks bright, and it becomes even brighter for anyone listening to music from Andromeda. Lundsten obviously takes the future seriously in his own way, but he is an exception. The staggering feeling in sf - in books, films and games - comes otherwise from the gap between fact and fiction, in differences that seem so unreal that they almost seem probable. /A fine way to phrase it! The fact that the Wall fell in Eastern Europe was, some think, almost like experiencing sf in real life, Communism was toppled and everyone waited for utopia, but instead it began to crack, and undiscovered conflicts have since popped up in both East and West. The international panel with members from Lithuania, Ukraine, Russia, France, USA and Sweden had of course different answers to the question of what went wrong, but no opinion was discussed as much as Norman Spinrad's. For him it was clear. The solution for the former Soviet Union was the Soviet Union, and re-creating Yugoslavia would also solve the war in Yugoslavia. The East European guests were polite and satisfied with raising their eyebrows and leaving the room. When sf fans are confronted with an obsolete reality cracks appear. The latest example is the cyberpunk authors who are accused of painting a drug-drenched and negative picture of the future, but in reality they have only noted and imagined things from what they already see around them and merged the artefacts of street culture in an unusually attractive way. They are hardly responsible for the cold computer technology, even though the books have left lasting contributions to design and vocabulary. But what threatens sf as a literary genre is that our time offers far bigger, more provoking and more revolutionary changes than the most spectacular sf novels. There's for instance a hypothesis around that man isn't the crown of creation, but the next last step in a chain of development, necessary only for inventing the computer and robot. The thought is unreasonable, for sure, but not totally insane, considering that man will himself design an artificial intelligence that surpasses our own. Reality has changed, and with that also the fantasy. If sf will find a place in the future is rather a question of how well it can interpret the present, not the future.

A lot of interesting thoughts in what I may say is an unusually well-written newspaper report from a con! The writer is the for me unknown Sven Rånlund. A pity I saw it only 26 years afterwards. I would have sent him some more SFJs and fanzines and congratulated him for serious take on the genre. (Googling I find it seems he has left journalism and gone into music. It may explain his respect for Ralph Lundsten's music, the composer and cosmic philosopher whom I have covered earlier here.)

Lets move to another con. *Intermission* has covered 1970's Fancon before, but here's another piece

I found, from Dagens Nyheter, June 2 1974. The "corps" referred to is what the student union house was called, *"Vampires, Werewolves sweeps into the Corps"* (clip on a previous page):

*Just as Stockholm began to close for Pentecost, bleak and silent persons enclosed themselves in the auditorium of the Corps on Holländar Street for their own very special ecstasy. Far from sunshine, birdsong and the trivial things of Earth they sat down to listen to strange tales of phantoms, vampires, cosmic adventures and interstellar disasters. It was Sweden's scienfictionists to a number of 200 men and just a few women who met for FANCON 2. In which CON stood for convention and FAN didn't have with devilry to do but is the English word for enthusiast. /"Fan" is since long used that way in Swedish too, but "fan" is also an alternative word for the devil! The number 2 doesn't mean anything special, but was there anyway because numbers belong to science fiction. /Eh, it was the second Fancon, Sven! YOUNG ENTHUSIASTS The enthusiasts were mostly young, except Carl Johan Holzhausen who is a bit over 70, ex-journalist at Hjärne's Göteborgs-Posten and now as retired one of our most appreciated sf authors. The Swedish academy for sf, a somewhat younger version of The Eighteen, will during FANCON award him the 1974 sf statuette, a figure carved in earthly wood /by Urban G, presented here before!/. The convention had a soft start already the day before Pentecost Eve by watching the sf movie The Werewolf Vs Frankenstein, a piece of such incredible rottenness, according to convention chairman John-Henri Holmberg, that it has become a permanent part of sf meetings. THE PITS IMPRESSED After that they had a look on town, restaurants and pits in the topography. The convention's foreign GoH, one of the big ones in international sf, was very impressed by both the food*

VAREN 1969 visades en rad sciencefictionfilmer i TV, ett lov-  
värt initiativ trots att kvaliteten  
på filmerna för det mesta var usel  
och urvalet diskutabelt. Seriens  
producent Sam J Lundwall har  
nu i efterhand kompletterat pro-  
gramserien med en liten bok,  
Science fiction (Sveriges Radios  
förlag, 22:50), som gör anspråk  
på att vara den första historiken  
på svenska. Det stämmer ju inte  
riktigt; det finns många som har  
skrivit om sf i Sverige, en av de  
första var Elisabeth Tykesson i en  
essä i BLM 1954. Men Lundwalls  
bok är den hittills fylligaste histo-  
riken, från Platon fram till Stan-  
ley Kubricks mastodontfilm "2001  
— A Space Odyssey".

Lundwall behåller sitt ämne  
väl, men jag tycker inte att han  
får ut så mycket av det. Han har  
skrivit en sorts kommenterad bi-  
bliografi, som är användbar som  
uppslagsbok, men inte mycket  
mer. Det egendomliga är att  
Lundwall, som uppenbarligen är  
en hängiven sf-fanatiker, inte ens  
tar sitt ämne på allvar. Stilen är  
kåserande och slapp, resonemangen  
ytliga. När Lundwall skriver om  
Edward Bellamys idéhistoriskt in-  
tressanta framtidsroman "Looking  
backward 2000—1887" (1888)  
anlägger han det konventionella  
sf-perspektivet; han tror att bo-  
ken handlar om år 2000 och dö-  
mer ut den som en naiv utopi.  
Men boken handlar om 1880-talet,  
sekelsslutets sociala utvecklingsop-  
timism och framtidstro.

Uppfattar man inte den idéhi-  
storiska-politiska bakgrunden, blir  
sf bara en bisarr litteraturgenre,  
ett kuriosum. I själva verket är  
den, som alla subkulturella före-  
teelser, en utmärkt vägvisare till  
samtidens myter, neuroser, dröm-  
mar och tabuföreställningar.  
Lundwalls bok fungerar som en  
glimtvis som en sådan vägvisare.

and the pits. It seemed he could very well place his next fantastic novel in this hospitable but chewed away city./There were huge construction projects in central Stockholm at the time, making central city blocks turning into pits with diggers./ Sven Christer Swahn, culture person from Lund and younger brother to Jan Öyvind Swahn, was Swedish keynote speaker at the convention. He has developed a sense for the fantastic in both reality and fantasy. He has now at middle age, after being fascinated by Tarzan son of the apes as a boy, become a convinced scienfictionists and published books like Our Man in Nyhavn. A dazzling tale about a Scanian journalist who stays at Nyhavn 17 and discovers that Copenhagen is full of Atlantes, that is descendants of the dwellers of the sunken Atlantis. Many Swedes have stayed overnight at Nyhavn and suspected something similar, but no one has described it so convincing as Sven Christer. DEBATE IN ENGLISH But he didn't speak about this on the convention, instead he read half aloud from the manuscript to what this autumn will be published as a book about Swedish sf. /It must be his 7xFuture, about 7 specific sf authors, but not Swedish sf/ The first thorough look on the art of sf, convention chairman Holmberg promised already in advance. The general public which wants to know more about what sf really is has a chance 12 o'clock two days after Pentecost at the student corps. Brian Aldiss, Sven Christer Swahn and others will then discuss with themselves and the audience about "Sf - entertainment or message". To give Aldiss a chance in the debate they will speak English. (Caption: Sven Christer Swahn, sciencefictionist from Lund, studies a misfit genre example.)

Sounds like a nice little con. I wonder if this was Brian A's first trip to Sweden? He was invited by Holmberg. obviously, but soon became a big buddy of Holmberg's not so great friend Sam J Lundwall (whom Aldiss met in the late 60's when Sam J did sf programs for Swedish TV). The student corps house was BTW earlier "occupied" by the 1968 students. As French students clashed with the cops, threw stones, torched cars and closed off Paris, their Swedish counterparts...occupied their own house. After sitting there for a day, chanting about a world revolution, they went back home. (And started the "alternative music movement" which a) hated ABBA and b) couldn't play any instruments except kitchen utensils.)

And next clip is connected to Sam J's TV programs (covered here before), more precisely the book that came out of it, a review from Dagens Nyheter June 28, 1970:

*A number of sf films were shown on TV in the spring of 1969, a praiseworthy initiative despite that the quality of the films were lousy and the selection questionable. The producer of the series Sam J Lundwall has now afterwards*



*completed the program series with a little book titled Science Fiction /full title "- from the Start to Our Days", published by Swedish Radio's publishing house/ which claims to be the first genre history in Swedish. That's not exactly true; there are many who have written about sf in Swedish, one of the first being Elisabeth Tykesson in an essay in BLM 1954. But Lundwall's book is the most comprehensive, from Plato up to Stanley Kubrick's blockbuster "2001 - a Space Odyssey". /Tykesson is covered before, but she wrote just an article. Sam did write the first book./ Lundwall knows his topic very well, but I don't think he gets much out of it. He has written a sort of commented bibliography, useful as reference, but not much more. The strange thing is that Lundwall who obviously is a dedicated sf fanatic doesn't even take his subject seriously. The style is light-hearted and lax, discussions superficial. When Lundwall writes about Edward Bellamy's idea-historically interesting future novel Looking Backward 2000-1887 (1888) he uses the conventional sf perspective; he thinks the book is about the year 2000 and dismisses it as naïve utopianism. But the book is about the 1800s, the social development optimism of the end of that millennium and belief in the future. If you don't see the history of ideas and politics sf only becomes a bizarre literary genre, something curious. In reality it's like all subcultural phenomenon, an excellent roadmap to contemporary neuroses, myths, dreams and taboos. Lundwall's book only partly works as such a roadmap.*

Two comments. I liked Lundwall's book, because it wasn't academic, trying to be pretentiously deep. It was a light-hearted introduction which just tried to make the reader interested in the genre. And as such it succeeded very well. You can judge for yourself by reading the English version *SF - What's it All About* (but I believe it's expanded a bit compared to the Swedish version). Secondly, it's a bit tiresome with these flatulent snobs who can't accept that everything isn't metaphors and interpretations, that a book actually can be *what it says it is!* I've read Bellamy, and it is definitely a novel that *literally* speculates about how society could be organised in the future. That's after all the point of utopian tales. The grandfather of it, Plato with *The Republic*, didn't make a social commentary of his time's Athens, but presented his idea of a "perfect society". And utopian writers follow in his tradition. Metaphors works differently. An sf writer says "I here speculate about the future", *not* (usually) "I want to write about today but for some reason I'll disguise it as the future..."

But let's move on to a comment by Sven Fagerberg, an author who also sometimes dipped his pen in sf, from Dagens Nyheter March 6, 1975 (part of a column, parts excluded are of no sf interest):

*And so the stencilled pamphlets. The first is a fanzine, that is a magazine about sf for the initiated enthusiast. A person unknown to me, Mats Linder, has written some, edited, typed it and made 200 copies of the 47 pages. It feels good that such things are done, and it erases the memory of a hundred hopeless so called real books. And there's something that's fun with sf, in it you often find the real joy of spinning a yarn. The first issue of Summa, as the magazine is titled, is about Soviet sf. Summa costs 3 Crowns /ca 50 1975-cents/ per issue. You can subscribe to no more than four (that's already a big promise) by putting a sum on Postal Giro 25 16 52-4, Mats Linder, 2B-9 Körsbärs Street, Stockholm. But I don't know if Mats wants more subscribers. It will just become a lot of work.*

Nice plug by Mr Fagerberg. He didn't have too worry too much about Summa. For the next dozen or so years it became the leading serconzine over here with very thick issues coming yearly (often as double- or even triple issues). Mats is still around, now doing a Swedish SF Yearbook with two volumes this far.

In last issue I wrote about the Tolkien parades held by the Stockholm Tolkien Society every spring. Here's more, from Expressen, May 19 1975, "*GANDALF and the whole gang - in the middle of town*" (more with Gandalf a few years later in the Ohlmarks story...):

*Elen sila lumenn ometielvo! That means Hi! Or precisely, a star shines during out meeting! That's hiw friendly you greet each other in Elfish. Vanadil taught me that. He is a king. But not in reality. In reality his name is Gabriel Stein and he's a member of Forodrim. That's also Elfish and means "people from the north". And it's the same as Stockholm's Tolkien Society. To start from the beginning it all comes from John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, a language professor in Oxford who died in 1973, at the age of 81. JRR Tolkien was a very clever*

Och så de stencilerade häftena. Det första är en fanzine, det vill säga en tidskrift om sciencefiction för invigda entusiaster. En för mig okänd person, Mats Linder, har författat några men redigerat, skrivit ut på maskin och dragit i 200 exemplar samtliga av de 47 sidorna. Det känns skönt att något sådant görs, och det suddar bort minnet av hundra dödkokta så kallade riktiga böcker. Och det är något kul med sciencefiction, i den finns ofta den äkta fabuleringsglädjen kvar. Det första numret av Summa, som tidskriften heter, handlar om sovjetisk sf. Summa kostar 3 kr per nummer. Man kan prenumerera på högst fyra (redan det ett stort löfte) genom att sätta in ett belopp på postgiro 25 16 52-4, Mats Linder, Körsbärsv. 2B:9 Stockholm. Men inte vet jag om Mats vill ha fler prenumeranter. Det blir förstås en massa jobb.





CECILIA HAGEN

## Här är GANDALF och hela gänget — mitt i stan!

**E**len sifa lumenn ometielvo!  
Det betyder hej. Eller exaktare: en stjärna lyser vid stunden för vårt möte. Så vänligt hälsar man varandra på alviska.  
Det var Valandil som lärde mig det där. Han är konung. Men inte i verkligheten. I verkligheten heter han Gabriel Stein och är medlem i Forodrim.  
Forodrim är också alviska. Det betyder "människorna från norr". Vilket är detsamma som Stockholms Tolkien-sällskap.

\*\*\*

För att ta allting från början så börjar allting med John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, en språkprofessor i Oxford som dog 1973 81 år gammal.

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien var en mycket duktig språkprofessor, men allra duktigast var han på att skriva böcker, sagoböcker. Så till den grad duktig att han kallades "världens siste sagoberättare".

"Sagan om Ringen" heter hans mycket kända sagotriologi. Har ni inte läst den, det är många som tvekar för det gäller att ta sig igenom långt över 1 000, till en början ganska så svårforcerade, sidor, så har ni kanske hört talas om den.

"Sagan om Ringen" handlar om Midgård. Midgård är Tolkien's alldeles egen värld, komplett med egen geografi, egna språk, egna folkslag. Där levde de feta små krullhåriga hoberna som vandrade kring på ludna fötter, där levde de goda alverna, där levde de hemiska svarta ryttarna och människorna och trädandarna.

Han beskrev dem och deras sedvänjor i minsta detalj, med en fantasi och en fabuleringsförmåga som

Minns ni honom så,  
Elrond — Martin Sten-  
lander, hans dotter  
Arwen — Nina Za-  
more — och troll-  
karlen Gandalf sjöle  
— Rutger Fahlén.



förmodligen saknar motstycke. Och folk läste och Tolkienfeber bröt ut, i USA, i Tyskland, i Italien, för att inte tala om på norra Borneo.

Till Sverige nådde inte smittan förrän 1967, det var då vi fick "Sagan om Ringen" i pocketutgåva.

1968 grundades Tolkien-sällskapet i Göteborg och sen följde Stockholm, Örebro och Uppsala. De existerar än, det är bara att bli medlem.

Fäst kanske inte så bara, vill man bli medlem så gäller det att ha läst sin Tolkien noga. Det räcker inte med att veta att Frodo var en tapper hob och att Bilbo, så hette han som bar ringen först och som försvann från den stor-  
festen, var hans farbror. Då blir man hunnit till  
då har man som jag bara läst de första tvåhundra sidorna.

Vid inträdesproven ska man kunna besvara frågor som: Vilket monster kämpade Gandalf mot i Morias gruvor? Vems dotter var Elnor den fagra? Vad hette Gollums kusin?

En fråga lyder: Vad var Sting? Det trodde jag inte man behövde läsa "Sagan om Ringen" för att veta.

\*\*\*

En hyfsad Tolkienkännare har mer än 600 namn att hålla reda på, dessutom bör han kunna något alviska. För att underlätta språkstudierna i fortsättningsen håller Stockholms Tolkien-sällskap på att sammanställa ett lexikon på alviska. På två år har man hunnit till bokstaven p. Och det är vackert så. Svenska Akademier har snart hållit på ett sekel med sin ordbok och inte kommit längre än till s som i skräpig.

Klarar du de hårda inträdesproven tilldelas du ett namn ur "Sagan om Ringen" samt uppmanas att under möten klä dig och uppträda som den figuren. Är du riktigt flitig upphäjs du från allmog till riddare med rätt att bära gyllene löv och kedja på din mantel.

\*\*\*

På pingstaften glimnade det av gyllene löv och kedje-  
i solskenet på Norrmalmstorg i Stockholm. Stockholms, Örebros och Uppsalas Tolkien-sällskap hade karneval. Svärd rasslade, flöjter pep och sammetsmantlar svepte.

Genom Kungsträdgården gick tiotusent och en något förvirrad allmänhet bröt då och då ut i applåder. Kungen skulle ju vara ute på eriksgata och man kunde aldrig veta hur långt han hunnit.

Stutmål var Bellmansstatyn på Djurgården och väl framme utbröt lärda tvistemål om alvernas seder och hobernas bruk. Samt om vem som läst "Sagan om Ringen" flest gånger.

Kycklingar packades upp, invånarna i Midgård missunnade sig intet av livets goda, vinglas höjdes och man utbrast i samfällt "eglerio" — hurra! För att avsluta med:

Nai Vardo eleni le siluva i tiennea — Farväl!  
Eller exaktare: Må Eiberethas stjärnor lysa på din stig



Tom Bombadil, ur "Sagan om ringen", naturväsen i räd hatt och flöjtandes mitt i Stockholms city.



En bodel direkt från vår tids nyaste sagobok, "om ringen".



Foto:  
JAN WIRG

Belladonna  
Bilbo Baggins  
till vardags  
tina Rhodin

## ÅKE OHLMARKS ON TOLKIENISTS:

"...it has become evident that the many Tolkien societies (thousands across all of America and half of Europe, a number also in Sweden) have degenerated into a sort of KU-KLUX-KLAN excersising open violence, the rawest of orgies, alcohol and narcotics abuse. There have been murders, constant cases of assualt, kidnappings and desecrating of churches and the sacraments".

"...in patterns recognised from the narcotics swamp, Italian mafioso...most of all American Cosa Nostra...Of the same kind is Tolkien Society and their foreign cohorts".

"Tolkieneering is more or less centrally directed from England and by the Tolkien family. /...as Christopher Tolkien/ has fled the taxman to France or it is usually said Monaco (all is secret and no definite facts are to be found) the movement is now lead by his more intelligent sister Priscilla Tolkien, assisted by Christopher's son Simon. It's not pennies this Mafia earns from the old mans fairy tale fantasies"

"He belongs to those waiting in a rathole, devious and hated sorts, forgotten the second after you've seen them. Rats will bite and their small yellow teeth may cause infections /...but/ he isn't the terrorist type except in flimsily written (hectographed) attempts to libel...like the slimy little Gollum in Tolkien's trashy books, a figure afraid of light who can be sneaky and could be dangerous if he wasn't so insignificant".

"...every moth slipping even deeper into the alcohol swamp...now mingling with riff-raff from the street, those who wouldn't even qualify to be in 'Friends if Evil' /...he was/ trying to break down the door and then stumbles to the bedside where he for hours boosts, lies, half vomits and cries for more booze".

"Was there some or someone behind the atrocities? How was it with mass murderer Jack the Ripper, who from 1886 ravaged London's East End".



language professor, but he was even more clever with writing books, books of fairy tales. So incredibly clever that he was called "the last fairy tale writer in the world". Lord of the Rings is the name of his trilogy. If you haven't read it, and many hesitate to go through over 1000 pages, in the beginning rather hard to go through, you may at least heard of it. LOTR is about Middle Earth. It is Tolkien's very own world, complete with its geography, languages, peoples. There lived the fat, small, curly hobbits which walk about with hairy feet, there lived the noble elves, there lived the terrible black riders and humans and spirits of the trees. He described them and their traditions in minute details, with an imagination and yarn-spinning which probably is incomparable. And people read it and there was a Tolkien wave in the USA, in Germany, in Italy, not to forget northern Borneo. This epidemic didn't reach Sweden until 1967, when we got LOTR in paperback. The Tolkien Society of Gothenburg was founded in 1968. I have covered that in a Swedish article. I knew all the founders. It was called The Tolkien Society of Sweden. And then followed Stockholm, Örebro, and Uppsala. They still exist, it's just to become a member. Or perhaps not just, because you must have read your Tolkien carefully if you want to become a member. It's not enough to know that Frodo was a brave hobbit, and Bilbo was the one who first had the ring and who disappeared from the big party. You'll be exposed, because they you have only read the 200 first pages. In the entrance test you must answer questions like: What monster did Gandalf fight against in the Mines of Moria? Who was the daughter of the beautiful Elanor? What's the name of Gollum's cousin? One question reads: What was Sting? I thought you didn't need to read LOTR to know the answer. /Newspaper Expressen has a wasp as symbol and the motto "It has sting!" / A decent Tolkienist has more than 600 names to keep track of and should know some Elfish. To make language studies easier in the future the Stockholm Tolkien Society is preparing a dictionary of Elfish. In two years they have reached the letter P. And that's fine. The Swedish Academy has worked with their dictionary for a century and hasn't reached further than S as in Scrumpy. If you pass the tough entry examination you are given a name from LOTR and are encouraged to dress like and behave as that figure. If you are diligent you are promoted from commoner to knighthood with the right to wear a golden leaf and a chain on cape. During Pentacost there was a glimmer of golden leaves and chains in the sunshine on Norrmalms Square in Stockholm. Stockholm's, Örebro's and Uppsala's Tolkien societies had their carnival. Swords rattled, flutes played and velvet capes waved. The march went through the Royal Gardens and a somewhat confused public sometimes broke out in applause. The king was out to meet people and you couldn't know if it was the real king. The goal was the Bellman statue on Djurgården and once there debates began about traditions of elves and hobbits. And about who had read LOTR most times. Chicken were unpacked, inhabitants of Middle Earth wouldn't miss any of the good in life, wine glasses were raised and they all cried "eglerio" - hurray! To finish with: Nai Vardo eleni le siluva I tienna - Goodbye! Or more exactly: May the stars of Elbereth shine on your path! /Captions: Should you remember him, Elrond - Martin Selander, his daughter Arwen - Nina Zamore and the wizard Gandalf himself - Rutger Fahlén. Pics to the right: A Hangman directly from the newest fairy tale, LOTR. Tom Bombadill, from LOTR, a creature of nature in read hat and playing the flute in central Stockholm. Belladonna and Bilbo Bagger /Rest of it cropped/)

Normally, it'd be difficult to count Tolkien groups as part of fandom - except for the early years. Both the Stockholm and Gothenburg societies were started by sf fans. It was only later many of them became almost obsessed with masquerading and imitating Middle Earth in every detail. However, I can guarantee they never turned into a criminal Cosa Nostra, or had parties of sex and narcotics in the woods... (I've been to some of them. The more exotic entertainment was missing, I'm afraid. Forodrim founder Anders Palm disappointingly exclaimed: "Why didn't they let me in on all this fun!")

This brings me to one of the strangest episodes in Swedish popular literature, the scandal around Tolkien and Black Magic. There are so many details in this story that I can only briefly touch upon some central events. The Royal Library covers some of it in a series about strange books, but doesn't go into all details, maybe not believing in the craziness of everything... Here's that through Google Translate:

<https://translate.google.com/translate?sl=auto&tl=en&u=https://www.kb.se/hitta-och-bestall/samlingsbloggen/blogginlagg/2019-08-21-tolkien-och-den-svarta-magin.html>

The original Swedish translation of LOTR was by one Åke Ohlmarks, an academic who had a rather big ego - as those tend to have - and a bonehead with thick bones and belly. His translation was



Åke Ohlmarks – big belly, big ego.



lousy, by dropping bits, misinterpreting the story, doing numerous mistakes, being too generous with rewriting, inserting his own stuff, and much more. The translation was so bad that Tolkien himself demanded a new translator for *Silmarillion*, and it became the fine sf critic and expert Roland Adlerberth (and LOTR itself has in recent years had a new translation by fan Erik Andersson). But before all this - it took time for Ohlmark's deeds to seep through - he was regarded as a respected Tolkien expert, for instance being on TV on a quiz challenge on the topic LOTR, courted by the local Tolkien society in their costumes.

But the facade began to crumble. I remember how the SFSF newsletter in 1977 ran several pages with the story of how Ohlmarks stole fan Ingvar Svensson's Tolkien dictionary! Svensson, known eg for his massive *Skandifandom* volumes in the 1960's, had spent several years doing a dictionary of names, language and terminology of Middle Earth. He sent the manuscript to the Swedish LOTR publisher, who unwisely let Ohlmarks see it - and he exploded! Someone trampling into his private domain! Unthinkable! Ohlmarks claimed he had a almost finished Tolkien dictionary himself...

Svensson got his manuscript back, full of Ohlmarks scribbles, and soon thereafter came the latter's "own" dictionary. Despite getting the bulk of things from Svensson, the newsletter noted that the Ohlmarks dictionary still contained *thousands* of errors! Sloppy copying.

But the final nail in the coffin for Ohlmarks & LOTR came one morning in the early 1980's. Ohlmarks had entertained a couple of guests, one Gandalf and a friend, from the Uppsala Tolkien Society. After they had left one night his alcoholic wife caused a fire while smoking in bed, which damaged a wing of the house they rented. Ohlmarks blamed the local Tolkien society for the fire and demanded that they paid for the damages, which they of course refused. It had noting to do with them. Ohlmarks claimed Gandalf & Co had "forced" his wife to drink, as if you have to force an alcoholic to drink. It's her own fault if she decided to smoke in bed and then dropped a cigarette or how it all exactly happened. To this should be added that Ohlmarks, often living beyond his means, was constantly chased by the taxman. Being in economic dire straits he probably thought it was a good idea to try to blackmail the Tolkien club to solve his money problems...

His book *Tolkien och den svarta magin* ("Tolkien and the Black magic", 1982) was his revenge. The fire and quarrel with Tolkienists started it, but steam pressure built from being rejected as Tolkien translator and the dictionary brawl.

It's the strangest and angriest books I've ever seen! And the whole affair reached the headlines of newspapers and even a debate in radio, where publisher, fan and co-founder of thre Stockholm Society Forodrim Jörgen Peterzen(RIP 2018) defended Tolkien, quite successfully too.



Funny book...

JRR and his son Christopher and publisher and all involved where in the book described as a world-wide Mafia of the Costa Nostra type, even killing people. (A kid much into playing Dungeons & Dragons had died, exact circumstances unclear at least for me. That D&D is something else than LOTR didn't matter.) SS was also mentioned. The Tolkien societies in especially Sweden where described as Satanists where the use of "black magic" probably was the least of their vices. They had the wildest possible sex and drug orgies in the woods. Human sacrifices weren't out of the question...

"The police must close down the Tolkien societies and take action against their orgies and black magic," he demanded.

If you take everything that has been said about eg the scientologists (BTW that's basically true, but it's another story) and turn up the volume to 11, that's what Ohlmarks said about poor JRR and the Tolkien societies.

"Many Biblical phrases comes to my mind when I now think about the decades I have wasted translating Tolkien's rubbish", he said.

It's a pity this legendary plane-crash book is only in Swedish. It's incredibly funny! An English

audience would probably appreciate a translation and have a very good laugh. See quotes on a previous page!

For those knowing Swedish fan David Nettle made a series of hilarious tweets about Ohlmark's unintentional humour masterpiece (search a bit down from here <https://twitter.com/davidnettle> ). Personally, I'd also recommend anyone interested to get hold of his THX book - Ohlmarks defends a quack "doctor" - and his war memoirs *After me the Deluge*, where he dupes us about his career in Nazi-Germany 1939-45. The artist legend and writer Hans Alfredson identified Ohlmarks as a local quisling, in his fine alternate history book *The Pålsjö Woods Attack*. Åke Ohlmarks would be one to welcome the Nazis if they had tried to invade Sweden.

## MAILING COMMENTS

**Garth Spencer:** I should try to find *The Last Centurion* by John Ringo - pandemic and global cooling! Cool. A book I otherwise recommend is *Fallen Angels* by Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle and Michael Flynn, in which the Greens are in power. They nag about global warming, have banned cars, planes etc - while glaciers grow over North America. Optimistic, technology-friendly sf fandom is an enemy, persecuted, small and works almost as an underground resistance movement. The Worldcon is held in a tent in the woods by a handful of fen... Very entertaining. It was available for free as a PDF from Tor Books earlier, an offer which now withdrawn. (But I know that if you look around a bit you can still find the free PDF.) Now sports: One mitigating thing, it is a harmless way of channelling unhealthy nationalism into something mostly harmless. I'm no fan of this primitive territorial programming called "nationalism", but some still have this urge to wave flags and chant - so give them sports! They can do it in the stadium and then go home and be free from the drive to come in conflict with guys from other turfs. Sports work as a steam valve. Also, think of sports as the original reality shows! People gather and perform tasks, the public watches and someone wins. Anyway, I am as I said, not very die hard. I just follow some soccer, hockey and skiing, int'l events, no clubs. (BTW, Sweden just lost in the Euro 2021 tournament with a goal by Ukraine the very last minute. Sheiße!)

**Henry Grynsten:** I agree that opera is passé. The followers are few. Each ticket to the Royal Opera in Stockholm must be subsidised by more than €200. The creativity is low (they mostly play 200 years old stuff), you don't hear what they sing and it is frankly boring. I understand that jazz has also been pushed a bit into the background, but that kind of music is more flexible and dynamic so it's still enjoyable. "Real" rock'n'roll is perhaps a bit on the same path, replaced by things like hiphop, rap...and machine-produced radio-list music, which I don't enjoy - I like stuff from the 60's and 70's. But there are two things I miss in your music analysis. 1) Music is about *melody*. A song you like, in whatever genre, must have a melody that goes in through the ears and rattles around among the brain cells and creates a feeling you like. And I've often wondered how did it all start, who was it that found out nothing captures a heart, like a melody can - well, whoever it was, I'm a fan! 2) The music genres have always been highly dependent on available technology. The opera singing style comes from that they didn't have microphones and amplifiers. Jazz with instruments like trumpet, clarinet and piano worked well on 78 rpm records with their clean, strong sound. Rock needed the electric guitar, invented in the 1940's. Expressive, elaborate music like Sgt Pepper's and Pink Floyd became possible with more advanced studio editing, the Moog and the LP. Rap and hiphop came with digital sampling, sequencers and even more advanced mixing and editing. The present scourge of braindead radio top-list music - even more boring than opera! - came with the explosion of local radio stations and computers making automatic play lists. As for literature, it is clearly less dependent on technology. A text is a text is a text, no matter if it is copied on parchment with a quill, printed by lead types, photo set for offset, written on a PC. But literature - but it is very dependent on what the *market* looks like. Newsstands on train stations and newsboys selling stuff on the streets gave us penny dreadfuls and dime novels. Cheaper processes for making paper together with the linotype and monotype gave us the pulps. Growing economy made people able to afford them, shorter working hours and no TV gave time to read them. The second world war gave us the paperback book, smaller



than the pulps in a format the soldier overseas could put in the pocket of the uniform. The pulps died with competition from TV, comic books and rock music, while the paperback survived because its format allowed novels, not having mostly short stories like the pulps, and that was more like the traditional book market, which it could connect to. We got the system of a book first being done as a more expensive hardbound for the traditional bookstores and after a while it came as a paperback for the stacks at the airport. BTW, the golden age of sf - apart from being 12! - was rather immediately just *after* World War two. I'm talking about the US, where there was a paper shortage during WWII and the number of sf mags was only 3 or 4 (plus some short-lived ones), compared to the early 1950's when there were perhaps 30-40 sf mags at one and the same time! And the influence of John W Campbell, while beginning in the late 1930s, lasted well into the 1950s, before he began with dianetics, dean drives etc. Galaxy and F&SF came. Also, the new technology from the war - jets, rockets, atomic power, computers, penicillin, new materials - didn't come into more general usage until after the war. I agree that the sf genre now is unfortunately withering and has been the last 2-3 decades. It is partly due to changing mentality, and partly due to increased competition from more TV, computer games, social media and all the other stuff on the Internet. Sf on TV and in movies grows fast. We also see cross-genre competition, as fantasy - a genre which often is sloppy and very unimaginative, methinks! - crime fiction and so called romance fiction have become more popular. Romance fiction has flown a bit under the radar, since its a guilty pleasure dominated by women readers, but it has become extremely popular. The change of mentality to more pessimism, conflict, conspiracies and polarisation has also been good for horror fiction, with increased popularity for Lovecraft, vampires, zombies and so on. The more pessimistic mentality is in my opinion extremely strange! Let's leave the (after all passing, temporary) corona pandemic for the time being - the time to assess that comes when it's over. Generally world is in a better shape than ever! It should be a time of optimism, not pessimism..The world economy has grown more than ever the last 30 years, the cold war ended (the present quarrel with Putin is a mild breeze compared to the US-Soviet confrontation) and bumps like 00's recessions never developed like the 1930's depression. The environment improves: urbanisation makes forests increase, DDT, freons, mercury, leaded petrol etc is banned, double hulls and GPS keeps oil spills down, there are more water purification plants built. And don't worry about climate, which varies with the sun's magnetic field. The number of military conflicts has been going down, with fewer victims, despite Syria and Afghanistan. We just get the wrong impression from more war reporting, due to the explosion of TV news which always tend to emphasise drama. Internet brings people more together, we live longer, healthier and better fed, which is most noticeable in the third world, while not so much in the developed world which is already on a - temporary? - health plateau. And more would be mentioned. The background for the *unreasonable and illogical* pessimism and the polemic and polarisation is the 1968 generation, when socialists and red sympathisers demanded "a new world order" (=communism). But when they were denied this they and the children they raised in the same belief - with the help of postmodernism and other stupidities taking over universities - still continued to whine. The increased globalisation has also met a reaction in the form of what I call neo-nationalism, which gives the left a target and increases the volume of whining. We see neo-nationalism in eg Hungary, Poland, in the UK as Brexit, in the US through one Mr Trump, in Sweden as the Sweden Democrats (hovering around 20% in polls), and so on. The neo-nationalists are just as good at whining. With whining left and right echoing everywhere, we can't hear all the good news about how the world is improving! (A certain virus is just a bump that will pass.) This affects the sf genre too, basically an optimistic literary genre which is pushed towards more pessimism, so called "identity politics" and things like that. In sf we conquer space, disease, poverty, war (except war with aliens), science and technology opens new possibilities, we let robots work for us - there's hardly any limit to the progress. But optimistic literature doesn't fit with the inexplicably pessimistic times. Further: the notion that more city life from strong urbanisation also effects cultural shifts is certainly valid. In cities we live more cramped, with

more opportunities and choices, in a higher tempo, having more interactions, more sensory stimulus, and so on - that certainly affects how we approach culture and art. A final comment: I disagree with the claim that technological development is slowing down. The Internet, computers and mobile phones daily show it's not the case. I consider myself well-versed in computers and such, having used it daily for more than 35 years, but today things happen so fast it's hard even for me to grasp it. We have lots happening in VR, AI, quantum computing, robotics and more. And consider medicine: the human DNA has been mapped, we can probably clone mammoths soon, we treat cancer better and better, we created not one but several corona vaccines in less than a year, and much more. And in astronomy, space and physics, we can see the edge of the universe, we've send probes to Pluto, several rovers move on Mars, we track gravity waves, find the most sneaky particles with huge accelerators, SpaceX builds the biggest rockets yet - reusable, aiming for Mars in the end... No, science and technology isn't at all slowing down. Unfortunately, its increased speed make some feel dazzled and unsure, and it becomes just another reason for whining...

**John Thiel:** You seem to have been very late with computers, getting one in 1996 but not really using them until 2001... I had my first tiny computer in 1981 - the Sinclair ZX-81 with 16K memory (expanded from 1K), useless for all practical things. I got a PC with 512K memory in 1985, and it immediately proved very useful. Word processing was wonderful and I could even gut stencils with a daisy wheel or matrix printer (and from 1987 making very professional looking stuff with DTP and a laser). Around 1988 I got a modem and began using BBS:es, which had an early sort of "amateur Internet" called Fidonet, and from 2000 I was on the real Internet. As for WOOF, I have contributed to a couple of them, but I don't think you need to "be invited". They probably take anything as long as it isn't complete rubbish or very offensive. You just need to know the deadline and who to contact.

**William McCabe:** Yeah, I agree that Britain doesn't take the Eurovision too seriously. We know there's a lot of good music coming from there - virtually all my favourite 1970's rock band are British, many of the so called prog bands (note: over here Swedish "progg" music was something different). That Brits don't give half a French fry about Eurovision is a clear a sign of euro scepticism and Brexit.  
(No N'APA MCs, since there's no new mailing since last from there.)



*LON*

*What you get crossing a spider with an anteater, according to Lars "LON" Olsson.*

**Roscoe saves! But Willis scores on the rebound...**



Archive Midwinter  
a zine for N'APA 253

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6 June 2021

### Comments:

**Jose Sanchez:** Cover: Fun Battlestar Galactica Viper variant! Love the nose-up attitude, aggressive and fast! Great colors and great "tech" drawing style.

**fanac.org:** Nope, I don't have any of those... Wonderfully cool that so many fanzines exist, or have existed! Keeps us mighty busy!

**John Thiel:** Fun "stained glass window" intro art, and delightful Salvador Dali self-portrait!

re Synergy, I find it a bit sad that so many people can only really cope with one "fandom" in their lives, and if they develop a new interest, they drop out of activity in other interests. There's room in our lives for \*lots\* of fun things! Going to movies \*and\* reading! Going hiking in the countryside \*and\* baking cookies! Political activism \*and\* knitting! Now there's nothing very wrong with having one \*main\* interest, one favorite fandom, and letting the others play follow-up. And there's nothing at all wrong with \*changing\* this every so often, finding something new and cool and focusing heavily on that for a while. But do we throw away all our toys when we get a new one? Do we stop going to movies when we find a nifty new series of novels?



I think I am arguing, not so much for "synergy" as for "diversity," and especially for the richness of "buffet fandom," where you fill your plate with a little of this and a little of that... And, yes, maybe, when they all interact, just a little, that is synergy after all!

re the Dorsai stories, I wouldn't be surprised if there were fans "realizing" a Dorsai life-style, just as there are people who realize a "Jedi" or even "Klingon" life-style. In my opinion, Dickson's novel "The Tactics of Mistake" is the ideal introduction to the Dorsai concept. It's a fun novel. (And, in my wargaming days, I actually learned how to use "the tactics of mistake" against opponents! It actually does work!)

Very pretty closing art!

**Will Mayo:** Lovely opening photo! A non-sexual nude can be a figure of fine art indeed, and the scene, a rock quarry with a waterfall, looks like a really fun place for skinny-dipping! (Oh, wait, is that a quarry, or the result of natural erosion? It's a lovely place indeed!)

re the gods, I've always mildly admired Talbot Mundy's gentle theology, where there are gods, but they don't interfere with us. They simply inspire us, and, now and then, whisper advice. For the most part, though, I agree with you: active and interfering gods would be an additional burden to an already far too complex life! As Larry Niven said, a god might grant your wish, but he will always grant his own!

Pretty photo of Death relaxing by a very nice waterfall!

Grin! Fun picture of a Disney-esque future, with a clever caption-quip. I could also say, "...if the SciFi channel had stuck with actual Sci Fi!"

**Ahrvid Engholm:** You ask, why have social restrictions if Covid deaths are going down.... I answer, they are going down \*because\* of those social restrictions! I very strongly disagree with your suggestion that masks and distancing "will show to have had no or at best marginal effect." I believe they have been very massively successful. Yes, now is a good time to ease back and try to experiment with re-establishing normalcy, but do not fall into the error of condemning the health and safety regulations that have, without doubt, saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Remember, people \*are still dying\* from this monstrous disease. We have not won the war (and the lingering insurgency may last for decades.)

re Mensa, "I think there is a connection between being smart and being a smartass." Grin! There, I can agree with you wholeheartedly! Also, alas, there is \*no\* strong connection between being smart and being \*wise.\* And, worse, being smart is worthless without the hard work of obtaining knowledge and expertise. Raw intelligence is a little like raw strength: without discipline and practice, the strongest man is still a very poor warrior or soldier, and not even a skilled workman, Lifting a hod full of bricks is \*not\* the measure of a master bricklayer!

Fun retrospective on Artificial Intelligence. "AI" is already here in a weak sense, in the form of "expert systems" and other applications that don't work in a traditional "algorithmic" fashion. It is, of course, no great surprise that such magnificent computing power is being misused, for example in creating fake "nude" photographs of celebrities. Still, the applications have a great deal of promise (and will probably put me, personally, out of my current job in the next ten years!)

**Samuel Lubell:** Is the 21st century the Age of Unreason? I'm very sorry to observe that the rise of neo-tyranny worldwide is one of the most significant hallmarks of the 21st, to date. Perhaps "democracy" was doomed from the beginning, because it depends on trust, honesty, integrity, and legitimacy, all things that are relatively easily undermined by charismatic tyrants. Just ask Julius Caesar.

My friend's novel with five lands and five political systems is finished, but not up yet on Amazon. She's still re-writing the 2nd draft. The concept is all kinds of fun! There's a monarchy, a democracy, a tyranny, a tribal land, and a plutocracy or mercantile government, a sort of rule by corporations. The five all co-exist, uneasily!

re C.J. Cherryh, I've read a few of her books and enjoyed them. I think my favorite was Wave Without a Shore, involving an uncomfortable relationship between two persons of extremely high intelligence, who found they needed one another, even in the midst of their bitter competition. I believe she was also the author of a collection of related stories about cities of the future, a futuristic New York, Paris, London, etc. I Googled and could not find a clear reference to this.

Very amusing short-shorts, "Openings the Render the Rest of the Story Unnecessary"! I love short-shorts, and the wittier the better! One I remember, although I do not recall the author, went, essentially, "About the time the alliance of brave free nations



defeated the 37th Totalitarian Reich, people began to wonder if there were some sort of pattern occurring."

**George Phillies:** I love the concept of NefferCon, but I lack the technology to participate. (Also, I have a mild phobia of being on camera.)

re Michelson-Morley experiment, I am amazed at how many people insist they "got it wrong," as if the experiment had only been performed once. There are hundreds of thousands of interferometers functioning these days, and all are giving us the same basic result: we do not live in a privileged frame of reference. Detecting gravity waves is just the latest -- and coolest! -- confirmation of General Relativity!

rect Samuel Lubell, excellent point re book reviews: they can be "fair warning" as well as good advertising! Not long ago I bought a book on Amazon, read it, and discovered it wasn't a "book" at all, only the first two chapters! The author invited you to buy future chapters as installments. I was, of course, outraged, as this was false representation, and I wrote a VERY nasty Amazon review. If I have saved even one reader from the experience I suffered, I have done a good deed for the day.

Adara's Tale, "In combat, if I'm not cheating, I'm not trying." I think Julius Caesar would agree with that! As Willie Garvin said in an old Modesty Blaise comic strip, "I like having a nasty unfair advantage."

Strangely enough, this is contradicted, or at least modified, by one of the most successful generals in military history, U.S. Grant, who did *\*not\** like to have an

overwhelming advantage against his enemy, because he thought it was wasteful. If he could win a battle with 6,000 soldiers, he thought it was bad generalship to win it with 15,000. If he had enough resources to have a 95% chance of winning a battle, he would prefer, instead, to fight two battles each at a 75% chance of

winning. His path was expensive in terms of casualties, but he was one of the few fortunate generals in history who didn't have to worry about recruitment levels. He *\*had\** the troops, and he spent them. It wasn't always pretty, but he won in the end.

### **Arms and the Woman I Sing**

I do not know why -- phobias and philias are beyond rational examination and even Freudian analysis sheds no light -- but I am very much in love with the artistic motif of characters with multiple sets of arms. Ravening Kali, the elegant dancing Shiva, and others of their kind: the motif makes me happy. I remember the first time I saw the famous dancing Shiva, and I was hypnotized. I have sat in the San Diego Museum of Art, gazing fixedly for half an hour at a comparable work of statuary.

So, of course, joy of joys, when Marvel Comics, in their "Longshot" limited series, gave us "Spiral," a super-villain with a keen blue jumpsuit and....six arms. She instantly became my favorite character in comics!



# *Synergy 29*



**July 2021**  
**for NAPA mailing #253**



## *Cover by E. Nolde*

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Here's my fourth issue of this year, and this is the year I predicted last year was going to see some changes, not only worldwide and nationwide, but right here as well, and again, changes visible to the people on the net, including at the sf sites. In fact I have been predicting a changeover of things for two years, and you saw the changes last year brought, but they were largely calamitous, negative ones, a sort of clearing out of the workings of society, a stalling of what had been, not a very commendable year for things as they happen. But then I predicted more optimistic, forward-looking changes for this year, and we have seen many signs of that, somewhat of a Phoenix beginning to rise from the ashes of the previous year. And so I am trying to keep up with my predictions in this year's publications (the February issue of Pablo Lennis showed the Rapture) and you can expect me to follow up on this in Synergy this year, not that my predictions are that much of anything. But it's something I enjoy thinking about and talking to people about.



# EDITORIAL



Asiatic

Decor

## Nice Surroundings Add to an Experience—Try It!

As you might have noticed, Will Mayo advocates going naked. I agree that we have gotten too much used to clothes, having had them on most of the time each and every day through the many years, and have forgotten the experience of nakedness, if indeed we ever had it for any length of time. But I have noticed that we feel more like ourselves when we walk around naked, and have more feeling of and respect for our bodies, which is pretty much what Will said.

The experience of nakedness should be abetted by circumstances and surroundings that are also favorable to an experience in living. Or transform what may be the drab and dirty circumstances and dirty surroundings in which you live into what you see in them with your own perceptions, rather than the built-in perceptions of those who designed them. Or, as it may be, nature, which is seldom inspired, with the exception of the autumn leaf-paintings of Jack Frost. Come, come, you know you like fantasy—lead a fantasy life! What is your own concept of a window, not what concept did the manufacturer have. You've had that drummed into you. You've had the self-perception experience before, perhaps when you were an infant. I've always liked to flash back to those times. See the rubble left by blights and bombings as they are, as they may be, as they are to you. The mind will tell you more about your experiences than the multitudes.



I've been talking a bit about syzygy here, the experience of group mindedness, of making a sort of way of life of interaction instead of isolation and remoteness and self-centeredness. And here Will Mayo is not in concurrence with me, but from time to time he does express interest in the new ways, the psychedelic experience, the use of the net for interaction, and I would hint to him that one need not go all out about syzygy or similar things, but just dip into them, as he is sometimes doing; when he does he's doing some of the things I'm talking about. He has seen some of this mystical interaction and has not turned his back on it. If there is anything that would constitute a major change it is the spread of group consciousness, "sympathy and understanding" as The Age of Aquarius puts it, supplanting isolationism, as it is sometimes doing on a national perspective. We're talking about the war, but there has been more progressive talk happening which we have been mostly ignoring for years now. In literary work there is Jung writing of the Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious (not that he finds these faultless), numerous people including astrologers pointing out that it is the beginning of the Age of Aquarius, a song calling attention to Xanadu, which will bring a new culture into existence, is what's said of it, --science fiction seems to be missing a bet by not writing new and forward looking tales of this, although Sturgeon did not ignore it in his story "The Skills of Xanadu", which is a place that might be found by searchers for El Dorado and Shangri La. Poe wrote of El Dorado, "Over the Mountains of the Moon, down in the Valley of Shadow, ride, boldly ride, if you seek for El Dorado". The Valley of Shadow is the Shadow of Death. Surely we have all passed through that in these recent years of plague and total warfare. You must pass through death's shadow if you seek for El Dorado. The Mountains of the Moon? Well, what with our science fiction, we have been there too, and many in the general public are talking about the Space Program. Over the obstacles presented as we venture into space, and become more and more aware of the infinite, practically as well as intellectually. "We" is the cosmic outlook of the mass consciousness. Clarke was writing along these lines with his title of "Childhood's End" and in the Space Odyssey he was showing the man having a psychedelic experience at the end of the first book. He was learning aught of space, having jettisoned science at that point. But, of course, science is our medium, as it was Clarke's; but there is still that mystical thing to be learned. Heinlein, too, was doing mysticism in *Stranger in a Strange Land*. That was written at about the point in time that many readers of science fiction turned *en masse* to the ways of mysticism and the New Wave reflected a lot of this, becoming beat and hip with novels that portrayed the hip degradation. And fantasy fiction was in an emergence process commenced by the magazine of fantasy and science fiction. Since then we have been contending with Terry Pratchett's fantasy as well as Larry Niven's hard science. But there is a lot of agony in change. I suggest we start looking for the good elements in change, acknowledging that there is indeed change happening in our way of life.

## MOTIVATIONS *by Jeffrey Redmond*



Art by

Elena Vinnikova

*Sometimes motivated people get too motivated...but what are the motivations?*

From the ancient Er-Dan manuscripts (Codex 3144), as translated by Ed-Mon:

On the three mooned planet, in the more settled district of the smaller continent, there was the prosperous community of Kas-Kade. The inhabitants were healthy and well off, and they lived their busy and productive lives generally unhindered. This was so until the times of the foreign wars, and the recruitments and conscriptions of most of the younger males to serve in the military forces far away from their homes. The community, like so many others in the district, thus became predominantly female in population during these times. Some of the few males who did remain behind did so because they were too old or too young, and some did so because they were crippled or ill, or otherwise unfit for military life. But the majority of the males, including almost all of the better ones, went off far and away to the fightings.

The wars lasted for long periods of time, and many of the females grew up without fathers, brothers, or uncles, and without boyfriends, fiancés, or husbands of any kind being around. Most of these females kept busy with caring for other females, or other kinds of temples or community work. But many of them were sad, bored, and lonely without any much desired and needed male companionship. They felt deprived of wooings, marriages, families, and homes of their own, and they strongly desired and aspired to having these. They realized that they would be happier and more fulfilled as female ones if they had offspring of their own to care for, nurture, and raise. But the younger males remained far away from them, and so the females remained unloved, unmarried, and unhappy.

Finally news of the wars ending in stalemate and truces came, and the Kas-Kade



community rejoiced at the reports. But the casualties on all sides had been terrible, and too many of the males would not be returning to their homes. In the more settled district, out of every three males who went away, one would not be returning due to being killed or lost in combat. And another would be too badly wounded, so as to be permanently maimed and next to helpless. These ones were kept in hospitals, or special dwellings, or as permanent patients in their own homes. The females were kept busy with them, and they also hoped to find better husband prospects in the other third. But these ones were traumatized, completely worn out, and little motivated to develop and build careers or families for themselves. Many of them just sat around and consumed intoxicating beverages all day, without trying much to change and improve themselves. The communities became far less prosperous, and the district began to slowly decay away.

The females began to feel disappointed, frustrated, and angry with these returned males. So few of them were suitable as husbands and fathers, and it was the rare and fortunate female who could impress and entice a male to mate and marry with her. There were also customs and laws regulating marriages, and only in extreme and special cases could a male have more than one wife at a time. Some of them were able to marry a wife's widowed sister, or a dead brother's wife, but this was almost always in order to take care of them and their offspring so much better than otherwise. A male had to be wealthy and successful already to be permitted to do this, and so few males actually were that well off. Thus the competitions for available and suitable males became increasingly intense, as more and more females became of proper age to mate and marry, and become reproductive.

The elders of the Kas-Kade community met, and they listened to the fears and complaints of the many single females, all about the worsening economic situations and the lack of males for them. But the elders decided against relaxing any of the laws and customs, and especially on males having more than one wife except in the extreme circumstances. Some widowed females were able to still get married to a sister's husband, and some even married with a slain husband's brother, as the males' polygamous second wives. Some females even married with immigrant or refugee males coming in from other places. But the amount of extra and still single females remained throughout the district, and this caused them great insecurity in their lives. Too many females took to marrying with males who did not really care for them, and these females too often accepted just any male as a husband. There were even ones who wed with

males who were cruel or neglectful to them, and this was a very terrible tragedy in the society there.

When the elders met again to try to decide what to do to help all of the younger females, they were surprised by the problem taking care of itself for them. Throughout the district, and especially in Kas-Kade, more and more of the middle aged males began to pay increasing amounts of attention to the many available younger females. Most of these males were married to middle aged females. But they began increasingly to ignore their wives and to spend time, effort, and wealth with their new girlfriends and mistresses. There began to be more and more divorces throughout the district, as older males left their families to take up with and eventually marry the younger females. Many of the older females were just as plump, attractive, and desirable as the younger ones were, but perhaps not always as reproductive. Some of the wives could not have any offspring, and their husbands would sometimes also desire to father these with the younger females. Other older wives had already given birth to several offspring, and they were approaching their menopausal times to eventually alter to roles as grandmothers instead. Their husbands would, nevertheless, still decide to continue to father more with younger wives.

But, no matter what excuses the older males had for doing so, they increasingly began to turn away from the middle aged females to associate more with the younger ones, in whatever capacities suited them. The elders would meet and try to reprimand the middle aged males, including for their fooling themselves that they were just trying to be younger again. And the older males' divorced wives would often attack them with loud complaints about how hurt, humiliated, betrayed, deceived, and rejected they felt. Sometimes a male would divorce and remarry with a new female who was even younger than a daughter he had from his first marriage. But regardless of the reasons, the divorce rates went way up and the new marriages occurred much more frequently as time went on. Former wives and families usually kept the original dwellings, especially after lawspeakers were paid to determine proper divorce settlements. New wives were then established in new places, and they began to become pregnant by their older husbands, and to begin giving birth to offspring of their own as time went on.

The elders met yet again to discuss this phenomenon, and to try to figure out why so many inhabitants of their community were so prepared to so easily make such drastic changes in their lives. The elders eventually determined that a number of reasons were all important factors. There were increasingly hostile older versus younger female



antagonisms in the towns and villages of the district. And the middle aged males were very busy with taking care of former wives, current wives, and future wives, as well as all of their offspring. But the existing wealth was being better distributed, and the local economies improved somewhat as more and more of the inhabitants were taken care of in better ways.

The reasons for the changes were thus believed, by the elders, to be the many personal ones of all of the inhabitants involved. The middle aged males were often simply tired or bored with their middle aged wives. They saw, or thought that they saw, much more desirable characteristics in the younger females so abundant throughout the district. These were such things as youth, health, energy, enthusiasm, naivete, sex, and fun. And all with an attractive female who adored them, and who made them feel like they were important heroes, even when they were not really so at all. The younger females saw in the older males maturity, established position, fame, security, prestige, more wealth, and the males' abilities to be better protectors and providers for the females' own offspring. They saw that these males were already proven family orientated ones. And also that they could often win the males away, in competitions against other females, by luring any desired males away to mate with them. For females who had grown up in families without fathers, older males also provided father figures that they had otherwise missed in their lives.

Many of the younger females began to behave more and more provocatively around the older males, and many were seen to be fighting amongst themselves and with older females right out in open public places. Many of the males became more spoiled and not as respectful to females in general, and this lasted in this way for a long time. Eventually the population balance of the district evened out more as the younger males grew up to be in equal numbers with the younger females of the generations which followed. A lack of major wars for an era enabled the inhabitants to enjoy a relatively peaceful and prosperous period once again. In a later era there would be plagues and famines, and survivors retreating into the interior of the continent, there to dwell as more nomadic hunters and gatherers among the pale ones who covered themselves with body tattoo markings and decorations. But in the meantime there were lessons to be learned from the population imbalance that the elders found to be significant. Property and wealth inheritance laws were changed enough to also protect and provide more for single, widowed, and divorced females. Offspring were taught and raised to be a little more independent from immediate families, and more laws were made to protect

and provide better for them as well.

It is not known what any of the deities thought or felt about any of this, and it may never be known. But the inhabitants of the more settled district of the smaller continent were mere mortals, and ones trying to get by as best they could. The mistakes they made were done because none of them were in any way perfect, as no mere mortal can ever be. These foolish ones should all be understood, accepted, and forgiven for their follies. And life, as we know and understand it, should be allowed to go on.



## MOMENTS FROZEN IN TIME by Gerald Heyder



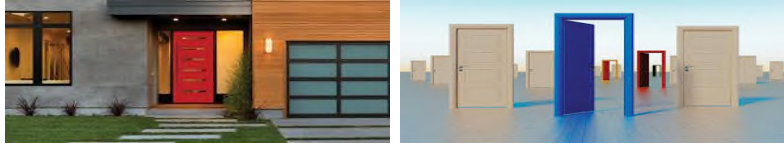
Oh those pictures taken in a passionate glitch of time,  
captured on film forever, recorded to be remembered as ever so sublime.

A kiss embraced to the chaste  
never erased through mundane amnesia,  
that thoughtless anesthesia  
that afflicts us homo sapiens when we waste away our thoughts  
through oblivious tenure of ambivalent idolatry dreaming.

Moments frozen in time,  
a camera's response to the things cherished in our heart and mind,  
forever on the screen we esteem  
for happiness and ecstasy forevermore.  
We are but a flashbulb away from eternity!







## **UNTRAP THOSE DOORS! By Betty Streeter**

Like dead batteries

Don't need them

New ones

awake and

Feel alive

Breaking down

untrap doors.

We arriving through

Not staying

We moving on

Nothing there

No More Unwanted

Dreams,

Clean dreams

open new doors.





**last page**

## The Contents of a Good Life #19



July 2021

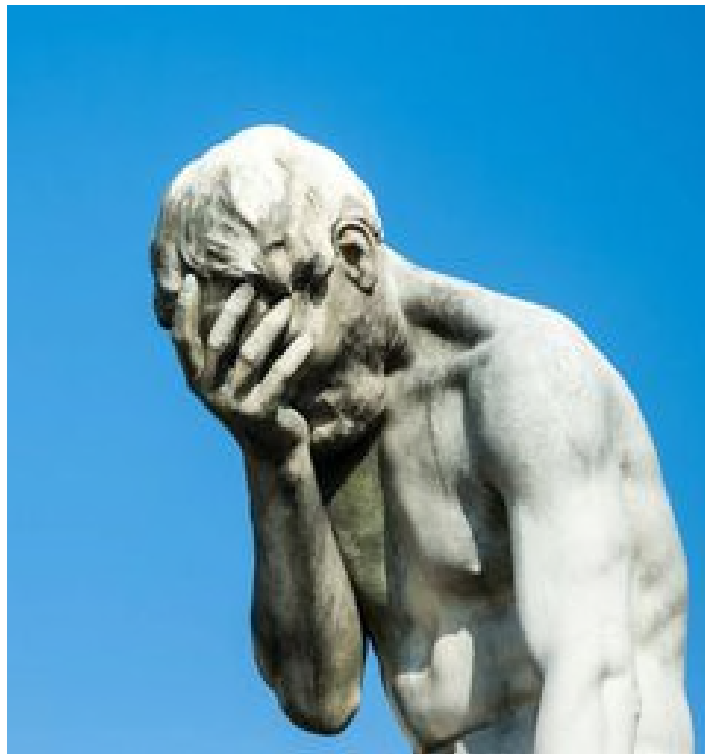
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Frederick is directly above Baltimore and on the state line. Use a magnifier or zoom.



What makes for a good life? In the eyes of my family and society, it was always a 9-5 career of which a lifelong disability and a habit of going off the deep end made it hard for me to achieve. For the more religious minded, it was always a god of their choice and a straitlaced life. I took one good, long look at the world around me and, seeing what little good gods had done for all of us, I went my own way. Now, at sixty years old and a habit of ruminating, I spend my time alone in a room but for a few good books and one good cat. Chances are, I'll live for the rest of my days here, a disappointment to many but still my own man. All in all, I'd say it's worth it.

Again, throwing out all questions of gods and the like, we ask ourselves: What makes for a meaningful life? For me, it's just spending my days and nights penning my tales and touching base with my pen pals and with only the occasional video chat or face to face encounter, re: somebody who understands me. For somebody else the answer may be something else entirely. It's important that we ask ourselves these questions now and then. Prayer and cash will not solve it all. This much, I have learned. Only the simple things need qualify.

People tell me to get back to earth, to reality. But I'm a believer in quantum realities. That is, we each make our own reality.

I find myself increasingly apolitical and irreligious. The times are too strange to be summed up by politics and religion.

I am struck by the arrogance of those who try to mold people into shapes according to their own liking. They fail to see that each human being is unique, deserving of his own road in life. The vanity of those that set out to determine others' destinies is astounding.

Personally, however, myself, I like the idea that we're all part of some godawful trashy novel and just when things start to slow down the authors throw in some UFOs and a few old ghosts. Hey, it's all cool by me. Just keep those pages turning.

I think I can safely rule out heaven and hell and other lives. They just don't stand up well against what I've seen here on earth over the years. But I don't rule out ghosts and I don't rule out the chance that my spirit may haunt these parts long after I'm gone. Stranger things have happened in this world just over the past few years, including helicopters on Mars and billionaires giving space tourists a bird's eye view of the cosmos. So keep your eyes peeled. I'm not gone yet, and, for all I know, I may not be leaving. There's a ghost of a chance yet.

Before I made my home in my town of Frederick, Maryland I often thought I would make a decent life in one of those ghost towns out West. Just me alone in one of those gold miners' shacks with the whistling wind and a few old ghosts. Like a life once dreamed long ago. Come to think of it, that's what I do now. What with me and my cat and my room full of books and some memories to follow me all my days. Lots of memories, that's for sure.

Yet sometimes even an old disbeliever such as myself is given a glimpse of what may lie beyond this life. And I am given a vision of a place of clouds and shadows. From above, a voice booms: "You who have cared about so little shall spend eternity with the only one you

ever cared about.”

From the shadows emerges my black cat Velvet. I welcome her into my arms as she begins to purr.

And so I spend eternity just the way I’ve spent the past several years. That is, telling stories to my cat. Surely, there are worse ways to go. The ideal life.

I had a dream early this morning during a brief rest that I was playing Neil Young’s song “Alabama” on an old fashioned record player of mine with Neil ringing out such verses as “Alabama, you’ve got your head on your shoulders/And it’s breaking your back.” I played this song, so beloved of the years, to the very end. And then I looked up and who should I find in the adjoining room but Jimmy Carter, the former president of my country. “You know, I like that,” President Carter said. “I really do.” The president and I listened to some more music and then I got some rest. When I woke he was gone. But the song remained in my head. It was a good day. Listening to Neil Young with Jimmy Carter.

In my town there have in the past existed two bronze statues of long, black dogs on porches with townhouses behind each. One bronze dog, named Guess, was stolen in the 70s and never recovered. The other, named Charity, lies on the porch in front of the Federated Charities Building on North Market Street to this day. The history of both these dogs is old and predates the Civil War and word has it toddlers would climb atop these statues while their mothers would stand on the street and look at them lost in a passing moment. Many of these toddlers and their mothers have since grown old and turned to dust but it is said by some that at the three o’clock hour on summer nights the spirits of those children can be seen riding the bronze dogs through the streets of my town in silent tribute to what once was and never will be again. Just some memories passed into the summer air by the wind and gone once more. In such a way are legends born. My town stands in honor of them all.

Some of my favorite writers that I’ve read over the years have been murderers, drug dealers and pornographers and they provided me with exceptionally good poems and stories in the passing moments. I don’t agree with the cancel culture that predominates our time. A writer’s background has nothing to do with whether he can provide a good tale or not. Or, if it does, a colorful and wayward path need only enrich the tale and all the more power to those wicked souls that tell them!

For most people writing is a mere hobby, a way to pass the time. But for the rest of us it’s a way of life. You’ve got to live it.

#### A SONG FOR THE CREEPS

Send up a dong  
for creepy, old men  
in the shadows.  
Mystics, seers, writers



and drunks and junkies.  
Those whom the years  
have passed by.  
And save a verse  
for their ghosts as well.  
Still haunting these rooms after all these years.

## REVIEWS

STAR TREK: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY. Like most guys that grew up in the 60s and 70s, I was a big fan of the original Star Trek TV show. And though I never got into any of the subsequent shows that followed I was always a big fan of the movies that starred the original cast. My favorite, by far, of those movies has got to be “Star Trek: The Undiscovered Country”, in which the gang go in search of the center of the galaxy. And what should they find at the center of that galaxy but a being that claims to be the god of all being. Leave it to Captain Kirk to get involved with a showdown with this god/being. This has got to be the most entertaining and thought provoking of all the Star Trek movies to date. Worth a download on your device any day.

HELLRAISER by Clive Barker. Inspired by the screenwriter’s trip to an S&M club, this is notably one of the few films about a trip to hell that makes you glad you came. It has every fright and every delight. Worth special attention is a character named Pinhead who is your host to hell’s every attraction. Worth the price of admission. I give this one five stars.

TRON. And I think of the movie Tron of about forty years ago in which a boy falls, body and mind, into a video game and becomes an action hero for whoever controls the game. And so we find ourselves in this strange new time in which UFOs are frequently sighted in our skies and scientists talk openly about their theory that we are all just toys in some alien’s video game. Whether any of that is true or not remains to be seen. But the game can surely only get stranger as we go along the way. Stay tuned.

THE BONE CLOCKS by David Mitchell. This is a great fantasy novel that concerns on one level the centuries old war between a group of immortal beings and a band of vampires that feed on souls but on another level it concerns the life of the English psychic Holly Sykes. As we journey through the pages we watch her grow and change from a teenage runaway in the 1980s to a barmaid in Switzerland in the years following the end of my country’s first Cold War to being a

pawn in that aforementioned war between immortals and vampires in the 2020s to the end of the story as Holly watches civilization and life ebb away from her in the 2040s at the Irish coast. It is such a good story that I was reluctant to put the book down once I had finished reading it. I recommend it to anyone interested in fantasy and life's journey in general. It's that good, yeah.



Ye Murthered  
Master Mage

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### **It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time. And Half of It Happened.**

Two issues back I called for an N3F newszine. It's something that we weren't doing. Now we have one, momentarily entitled *Nameless News*. Mindy Hunt's Convention Notes are part of it. So are Justin E. A. Busch's Fanfaronade fanzine reports and Cathode Ray's reports of the Videosphere. These were all fine, long articles that were bumping through the length limit for Tightbeam.

I still urge members to reach out to their electronic social groups and find people who might be interested in joining us.

### **NeffCon, the N3F Electronic Convention**

NeffCon is up on MeWe. It is an experiment, parts of which are working well and parts of which are working poorly.

You can now find NeffCon on MeWe.com. Why MeWe? Facebook occasionally gets upset with people or groups for reasons not clear to the banned people or groups. Also, links in Facebook posts as opposed to links in comments apparently reduce your viewership. Gab so far as I can make out still runs very slowly. So NeffCon is now up and running, albeit with limited activity.

### **Writing**

It took almost forever, but *Stand Against the Light* is complete and now up on Amazon and Smashwords. By the time you read this, it will be up on Smashwords as a presale item, which you can buy right now for \$3.99 at [smashwords.com/books/view/1092488](http://smashwords.com/books/view/1092488).

I have several scientific papers back from journals that are still in need of revision before being sent off for more reviewing. That's using time. I am starting to make progress albeit glacially on my next physics book, working title *Phenomenology of Polymer Simulation Dynamics*. I also have other technical papers I could repolish and submit.

On the fiction side, there is the next Eclipse novel, there are two Adara novels, and there are a bunch of other somewhat incomplete works.

I also have work for my SF club here and my wargaming club ... I am President of both of them.

Tomorrow will be a good writing day because the 'tropical storm' is passing through with heavy rain forecast.

### **Comments on N'APA 252**

**Fanac.org Zine Wanted List:** Joe and Edie, I hope that you are now swamped with zines to be scanned.

**Synergy:** Salvador Dali was truly a brilliantly imaginative artist. At one point, he appeared in the offices of Marvel and proposed doing a comic book with them. The mind is staggered by the thought.

So tell us about Richard Lupoff and why he is being deleted. Interesting thoughts on



alternatives to SF. I read one of the Shaver stories when it came out. That was a long time ago. That was a fine description of Jeffrey Redmond's writing.

Fen who thought Dorsai were real. Right! Of course! Everyone knew that! But why are people afraid of them, as opposed to the people who think Draka are real?

William Tenn was a pen name, but so far as I can determine not that of Tennessee Williams. Weisskopf is Toni Weisskopf; she has a daughter.

Re yr letter from Mayo: I am delighted, Will, to receive your reviews. Some people will always complain.

Will, the world is a strange place and getting stranger. Continue your adventures into the imagination. A fine modern poem.

**Archive Midwinter:** Thank you for your comments on my writing. Excellent point on our very wide genre having many writers whom each of us will not be taken by, and fortunately some number of authors who we really like. Lifeboats: If the water is not too cold or full of sharks, put several people overboard and have them hand on to the edge improves buoyancy.

Good point on prologue. My new novel, *Stand Against the Light*, now has at the front a *Dramatis Personae* (bad pun there) mostly because each of the tween Superheroes has two unrelated names, so that Comet is also Jessamine Trishaset (Trisha) Anson. Each now gets some lines of introduction, including a mention of their ages, superpowers, and background. Eclipse: World's greatest tween superhero? World's most terrifying tween supervillain? Opinions differ.

**Intermission:** Congratulations or not on trying to decide whether your country would have a new government or a surprise election.

Dotty Virvelwind never reached here, to my knowledge, though the drawing quality looks respectable.

You're right – it looks like a flying beanie. Sorry you had no mailing comments this time.

**Samizdat:** You wished for an N3F cyberspace convention, and you wish has now been granted. Sort of. thanks for leading a BaltiCon online discussion! Thanks also for the interesting reviews!

### **Adara's Tale – Practical Exercise continued**

#### **Trial Session 2**

At some point, the trial would resume. When? That wasn't my problem; that was why I had Moore as my attorney. He'd tell me what to do. I was busy with classwork. Fundamentals of Magic had started out with several days demonstrating some very different magical styles, most of which I'd never heard of, but now returned to very careful discussions of how to get spells of each style to work correctly. Master Aduriel was fond of gesture magic, so we spent much time learning different hand positions and motions, some of which fit into lists with rational progressions, while others seemed to have nothing to do with other positions.

If I were heir-first, I would have found Estate Management absolutely fascinating. There were all sorts of rules, and good practices. I had to remind myself that Triskittenion was an Outremer Associate,

not part of the Commonality, and that aspects of their tax laws were not what we would do. I was particularly interested when Master Accountant Hartpence discussed methods for moving unmen communities between loyalties, this being a path for englobing Associates not part of the Commonality until they found it beneficial to become Members. Some of these methods sounded like difficulties Triskittenion had with one of its neighbors. House Triskittenion, once upon a time, had been very far from the Commonality, but their borders were now approaching ours. I'd never heard Dad or Mom discuss this, and sent them a couple of long letters and two thick books, copies from library copying masters.

General Magic—Construction was a lot of fun. Master Gilbert's actual interest was constructing houses and other useful buildings, with a heavy emphasis on stone and on wood framing. If I ever want to go well out in the woods, not near Triskittenion Hall, find a small island someplace, and build for myself a completely private study, I was learning how to do it. Dorrance Academy maintains several large forests, trees being carefully tended and eventually sold. Yes, lumber is evanescent, but if you are careful in your design you can always replace even floor joists, one at a time, without taking the house apart first.

Schools of Magical Thought was a dragon in need of taming. Serene Master Reading was very gentle in his criticisms of my homework, but I was mostly making clear how much I did not know. I finally started reorganizing all of my course notes, all of my classes, to start filling the very large framework he was showing us. I also spent much time in the library, reading extra books and taking notes. I forced myself to attend public lectures as well as classes,

again taking notes and recopying them afterward.

Finally we reached a calendar five-day pause. Fourday was a class holiday. Moore summoned me to confer with him. Round two of the trial was about to commence.

The trial had been moved to the Dorrance Grand Theater, with tents and weather spells to protect the audience. Trial judges and their clerks were on a raised podium, front and center. Justice Merritt was now seated as lead justice. The new Associate Justices were Justice Rey and justice Cyn. I didn't know either of them. Nine High Treaty Court justices, all in their blood-red robes, each attended by a clerk in black frock-coat and trousers, sat in a row off to one side. The parties now involved in the litigation had the first two rows of the arc of theater seats, Triskittenion House being at one end of the arc and Fourbridge House at the other. Fourbridge's mother, wearing her Grand Justiciar's garb, was among his attorneys. It seemed to me that reminding people of her Judicial rank might tend to prejudice the assembled justices against her, but she clearly thought differently. Brother Moore had three long-time family attorneys present to back him, Michael Flaxhammer appeared to have half the Law Faculty seated to his rear, and Anthony Milano had been replaced by a group of Army attorneys.

I could see all this because I was with the other witnesses at the rear of the theater. Harold Fourbridge was at the far side of the theater, with four Brothers of the Axe escorting him. I could see the manacles gleaming over his void nodes. That should, knock on wood, keep him out of mischief. In the middle I spotted Master Monserrate, the docent whose name I still didn't know, Anthony Milano, and a slew of bodyguards.

Finally everyone was seated. Merritt brought the session to order. Arnold Toolwright from Violent House was the first witness, because he'd recorded the combat. His Eating House routinely recorded every combat, though apparently the recordings were normally too expensive to save for any length of time, because it was their path to identifying the best people to recruit as members.

I forced myself to watch carefully as his recording was replayed. I could identify each group of spells I cast, though if you asked me cold which spells I had thrown and in what order I mostly would not have remembered. Fourbridge Attorneys then asked Toolwright a series of technical questions about his recorder, mostly to establish that the recording could not be faked. Half of the questions he had to refer to his House's Graphical Spell expert. He pointed the recorder, did a great job of capturing images, but had no idea how it actually worked.

Finally Fourbridge and I as the participants in the combat were asked if we had identified any errors in the recording. Fourbridge said 'On advice of Attorneys, I decline to present evidence on this question'. As a defendant, you can do that, but Moore had explained: That statement often counts against you. On Moore's advice, I answered 'To the best of my recollection at this point in the trial, what I saw in the images agrees with what I remember doing.'

"Adara Triskittenion," Justice Merrit boomed, "Are you in any doubt as to the accuracy of the recording?"

"I saw nothing I didn't recognize. If there was a gap in the recording, I didn't recognize it," I answered.

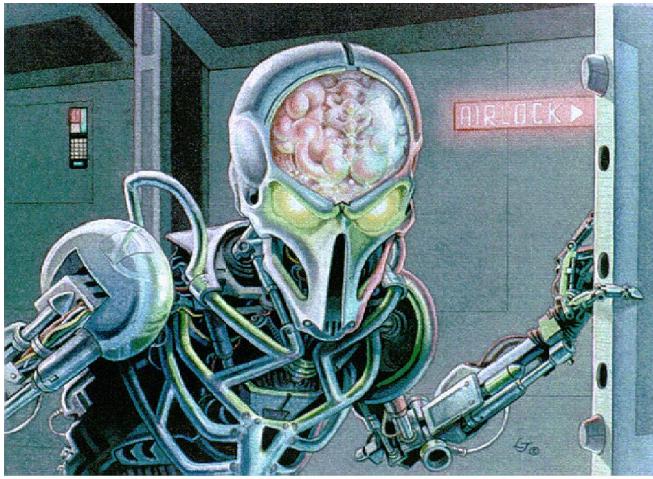
There was then an interrogation of Marshal-at-Arms Master Monserrate and his docent, one Luke Fossas. It seems that my summons had been a forgery. Monserrate's clerk generated a schedule, summonses, and sent them to students and to the docents who monitored the combats. Fossas and I had each received a seemingly valid summons, but both copies were forgeries. Extremely good forgeries, but forgeries. It appeared that most students, after taking the exam, dropped their copy of the notice, all properly stamped and sealed, in the trash. Someone had recovered two of them and altered student name, place, and date of the test. Fossas had appeared at the required place well in advance, made sure the circles were set and the actual construct was in place, and sat back to read. He'd been more than a bit irritated to have to walk all the way out onto the field, but he'd learned not to complain, lest Monserrate's clerk become annoyed with him. Again. He had no presets on his defenses. He'd heard no one behind him. When he recovered consciousness, he was spellbound, unable to act, watching in terror lest the circles protecting him from me and the golem should fail.

Monserrate, knowing exactly where his tests were to be administered, had been standing with his back to us. He'd noticed nothing untoward until the very end.

There had been a trio of my female classmates, not in General Magic, who'd watched the entire combat from a considerable distance. They used farseeing spells. They'd been quite impressed by my performance, but hadn't realized that anything was wrong. Didn't they think the combat had gone on too long? the Fourbridge Attorney asked. "Oh, yes," the oldest of them managed to say between giggles. "We were really impressed by his



endurance.” His? OK, I do wear my hair quite short. From any distance, male and female young adults have very similar body profiles. “We agreed we wanted to talk him into relaxing unaging with us. Preferably at White’s Beach. Except Vicky here. She thought he was a girl.” OK, I thought, one of them got that right. “She wanted to talk her into relaxing unaging with us.” OK, she got that half right. No to relaxing unaging. I believe I was the only person in the theater who did not crack a smile. I am not sure where the Fourbridge Attorney thought he was going, but he did not appear to get there. Moore gave me a note “Qs to discredit them as witnesses.’ That would have made more sense if their testimony had contained something new.



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### ...Letters of Comment on N'APA 52

Synergy-I think it is possible to be a sf fan and have spiritual interests. However, many fans justifiably mocked Dianetics, scientology, Lemuria, Zen, ESP etc. So people who developed those interests left sf fandom. I think fandom always remembers that SF/Fantasy are fictional so when people start thinking such things are real, they dissociate from fandom. Also, the SFBC does still exist although it is much less important in the Internet age when books can easily be ordered online. I disagree that liberals are the worst censors. It is the right that wants Harry Potter out of school libraries, forbids teaching the history of race, and prevents athletes from kneeling during the national anthem etc.

Good Life-The world has always been crazy. I think it is a lot less crazy now than it was during most other periods of history.

Archive Midwinter-Sorry you don't like Kuttner and Moore. I agree that Delany is an acquired taste. Although I adore *Slan*, I can't make heads or tails out of Null-A. Count me on the pro-prologue side.

Intermission - Restrictions on public gatherings were one of the things that slowed the spread of COVID before the vaccinations were ready. Since much of Covid policy differed by states, the U.S. is a laboratory of different approaches. And we are seeing continued COVID deaths in states that which have low vaccination rates while high vaccination-states have a much lower percentage of COVID and COVID deaths. I cannot see an Amerivision song contest gaining the same attention as the Eurovision one.

Master Mage - I need to check out NefferCon. The conversation in Adara's Tale seems interesting on its own. But in a novel, wouldn't it essentially be a lot of telling rather than showing (and repetitive if the novel had shown the action already)?

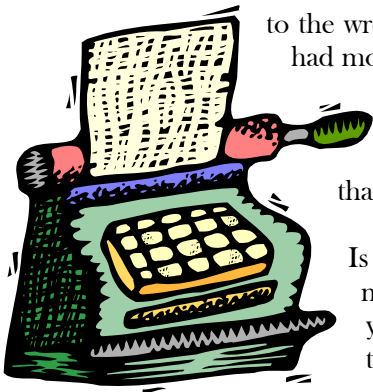
### ...Why Don't They Write Them Like They Used to?

I've heard a number of people complain that the Hugo nominations show we are paying attention to the wrong books and that the science fiction books of their childhood were more creative, had more of a sense of wonder, or were flat out better than what is published today.

People say that that science fiction has lost its optimism, that it is more concerned with politics and validating certain racial or ethnic groups than telling a good story, or that fantasy has taken over.

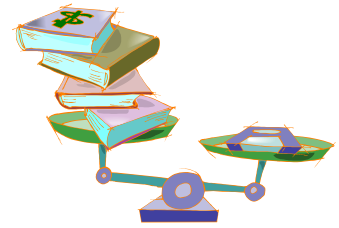
Is it true that science fiction books have declined in quality? It is certainly true that a lot more science fiction is published today than back in the 1950s and such. So, to put the years on an equal footing, let's look at the Hugo Awards since these are nominated by the fans. In 2020, the novel finalists were:

- *A Memory Called Empire*, by Arkady Martine
- *Middlegame*, by Seanan McGuire
- *Gideon the Ninth*, by Tamsyn Muir



- *The Light Brigade*, by Kameron Hurley
- *The City in the Middle of the Night*, by Charlie Jane Anders
- *The Ten Thousand Doors of January*, by Alix E. Harrow

I'd argue that *A Memory Called Empire*, the winner, is a first rank work of science fiction with *Middlegame* (fantasy), *City in the Middle of the Night*, and *Ten Thousand Doors* (fantasy/sf) being close to that rank. *Gideon* (sf/fantasy) and *The Light Brigade* (sf) are at a lower level (my opinion only, the voters ranked *City* and *Doors* below *Gideon* and *Light*). But I am not sure any of these rank in among the eternal classics that will be read decades from now.



Now let's compare this list to 1960's list.

- *Starship Troopers* (alt: *Starship Soldier*) by Robert A. Heinlein
- *Dorsai!* (alt: *The Genetic General*) by Gordon R. Dickson
- *The Pirates of Ersatz* (alt: *The Pirates of Zan*) by Murray Leinster
- *That Sweet Little Old Lady* (alt: *Brain Twister*) by Mark Phillips (aka: Randall Garrett and Laurence M. Janifer)
- *The Sirens of Titan* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

I'd argue that this list has three classics that will live forever: *Starship Troopers*, *Dorsai!* (although Dickson's popularity has faded), and *Sirens of Titan* and two I've not read or heard of - *Pirates* and *Sweet Little Old Lady*.



And 1970's list

- *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin
- *Up the Line* by Robert Silverberg
- *Macroscopic* by Piers Anthony
- *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
- *Bug Jack Barron* by Norman Spinrad

This list has two eternal classics - *Left Hand* and *Slaughterhouse-Five*. *Macroscopic* is also a very good novel (forget what Piers Anthony did later in his career) at least on the level of *Middlegame* and *Ten Thousand Doors*. I don't remember reading the Silverberg or the Spinrad.

And the 1980s list

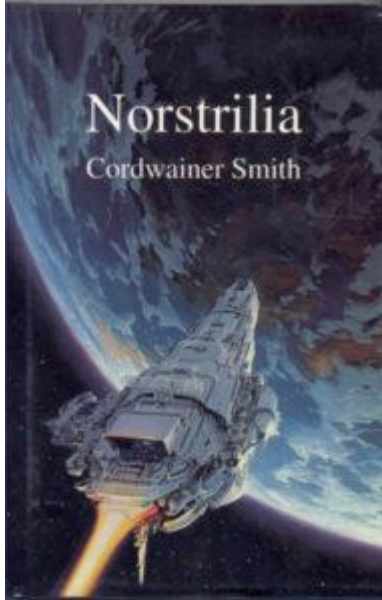
- *The Fountains of Paradise* by Arthur C. Clarke
- *Titan* by John Varley
- *Jem* by Frederik Pohl
- *Harpist in the Wind* by Patricia A. McKillip
- *On Wings of Song* by Thomas M. Disch

The Clarke is not his best work but has a strong scientific idea, that of a space elevator. *Harpist in the Wind* is the conclusion of an epic YA fantasy trilogy and is an eternal classic. *Titan* is the first (and strongest) book in the Gaea series, which is a fun explore a strange world work. *JEM* is also strong, but not as good as *Harpist* or *Fountain*.

I would argue that the 2020 list is not of the same quality as the 1960s list, and is slightly behind the 1970s and 80s list in terms of eternal classics. But it is not a huge drop in quality.



### ...Author Spotlight: Cordwainer Smith



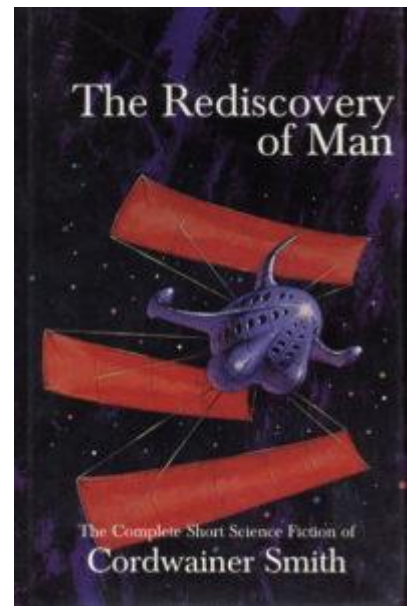
I would not call Cordwainer Smith neglected exactly. Thanks to the New England Science Fiction Association all his SF is in print – his short stories are in *The Rediscovery of Man*, a 670 page collection, and NESFA has published the definitive edition of *Norstrilia*, his one novel (originally published in two parts.) But many new readers of SF have not heard of him. There is a reason the Rediscovery Award, for lesser known authors, bears his name.

Cordwainer Smith had a unique writing style, sometimes influenced by Chinese writings, as if retelling legends. His narrator frequently spoke to the reader, saying what was important and why. Most of his works are set in the far future, when the humanity had grown jaded and only the uplifted Underpeople have vitality and life as they deal with their slavery. To solve this problem the Instrumentality of Mankind imposed what was called the Rediscovery of Man, restoring the old ideas of nationality and freedom. The titles of some of his stories give a sense of his writing: "Golden the Ship Was—Oh! Oh! Oh!," "The Lady Who Sailed The Soul," "Mother Hitton's Littul Kittons," "The Ballad of Lost C'Mell," "The Store Of Heart's Desire," and "The Dead Lady of Clown Town." No one else has been able to duplicate his

unique voice. Jack Vance sometimes covered similar ground but in a stylistically different way.

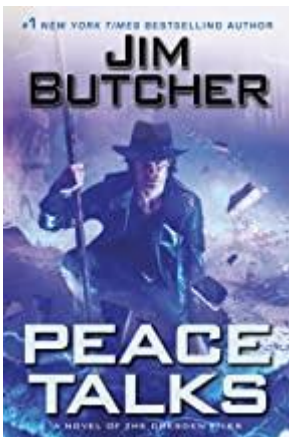
During his lifetime only a few editors knew Cordwainer Smith's real name. He was U.S. Army officer, college professor (in Asian studies), and psychological warfare expert Paul Myron Anthony Linebarger. He also trained CIA officers in propaganda. His father was a close adviser to Sun Yat-sen who became Linebarger's godfather. So science fiction was a hobby, not his main career. Smith's first published short story "Scanners Live in Vain," received enormous attention despite being published in the short-lived *Fantasy Book* magazine in January 1950. He would write 30 or so stories (a couple were completed after his death in 1966) plus his novel.

Readers who just want to sample his stories should haunt used bookstores for *The Best of Cordwainer Smith* (or get the ebook for \$6). If you want more, NESFA Press' *The Rediscovery of Man* collects all of his short fiction, even the story he wrote for his high school literary magazine.



### ...Reviews

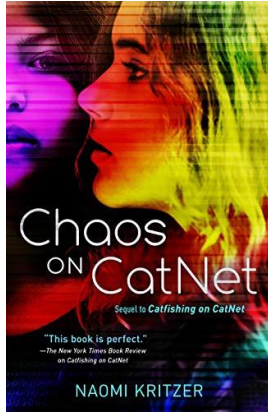
#### Review of *Peace Talks* by Jim Butcher



*Peace Talks* is the 16<sup>th</sup> book in the *Dresden Files*. The series started off with Harry Dresden essentially acting as a magical detective, but as the series grew his role changed. He is now a Warden of the white Council of Wizardry; the Winter Knight for Mab, the Queen of Air and Darkness; and the father of a young girl. In this book, the leaders of the supernatural world gather in Chicago to discuss the rise of the Fomor, an undersea power, and to try to resolve differences. The Council wants Dresden to provide security for the gathering but is not sure how much they can trust him due to his ties with Queen Mab and with the vampires. Then, right before the talks start, Dresden's secret half-brother, a vampire, attempts to kill the leader of the svartalfs, a major power and the owners of the embassy where Dresden and Maggie are staying. The head of the

vampires calls in a favor that compels Dresden to help rescue his brother (which he would have done anyway) which puts Dresden in conflict with his grandfather, a much more powerful wizard. Then, right in the middle of the talks the Fomor attack. The book would have been much stronger if the Fomor attack was not set-up for the next book, although Butcher does resolve the situation with Dresden's brother.

### Review of *Chaos on CatNet* by Naomi Kritzer.



*Chaos on CatNet* is a sequel to *Catfishing on CatNet* about an AI, CheshireCat, who likes sharing pictures of cats online and its involvement with a group of young people who shared a group message board on the AI's CatNet. In *Chaos*, Steph, the main human character from the first book, meets another new student at their school, Nell. Nell's mother, a member of the Abiding Remnant, an extreme religious group, has vanished and so has Nell's girlfriend, also a member of the religious group. Gradually, Steph decides to help Nell with the secret help of the CheshireCat. Meanwhile, the CheshireCat has discovered traces of another AI that may not be as benevolent and both the Remnant and the Mischief Elves, an online game that sends players on missions in the real world, are part of its plot. I think the AI plot and the YA plot do not jell together as well as in the first book and I think a malevolent AI, even an unwilling one, would be a much greater threat than depicted here.

### ...Return to Normalcy: Lessons from the Pandemic.

Things are finally moving towards normalcy after the Great Pandemic of 2020-21. At least in the United States, restaurants have resumed inside dining, movie theaters and museums are opening, and Broadway is scheduled to reopen this fall. In places where a large percentage of the population have been vaccinated, grocery stores no longer require masks. And many science fiction groups and conventions are meeting in person again.



Not everything has returned to normal. People still must wear masks on planes, trains, and subways, as well as in hospitals and doctors' offices. Many jobs still have people working from home, including the government. I have heard some speculation that the government will give people 30 days' notice about returning to the office and then start back up after Labor Day in September. There has been some speculation that agencies would allow more employees to participate in telework and for more than just one day a week.

As far as lessons learned, there is a surprisingly large number of Americans who will resist the idea of taking reasonable precautions of wearing masks to prevent the spread of disease and becoming vaccinated. A number will refuse to admit that a pandemic is happening at all even when half a million people die from it. And the largest group of these is the religious, of whatever religion, who say that their right to pray in public should trump efforts to prevent the spread of disease. This is part of an alarming trend of some Americans to believe in a separate reality and deny the mainstream media, even Fox News, when reality goes against what they want to believe.

*Samizdat is the work of Samuel Lubell and all opinions expressed here are his own, not those of any current or former employer or client.*